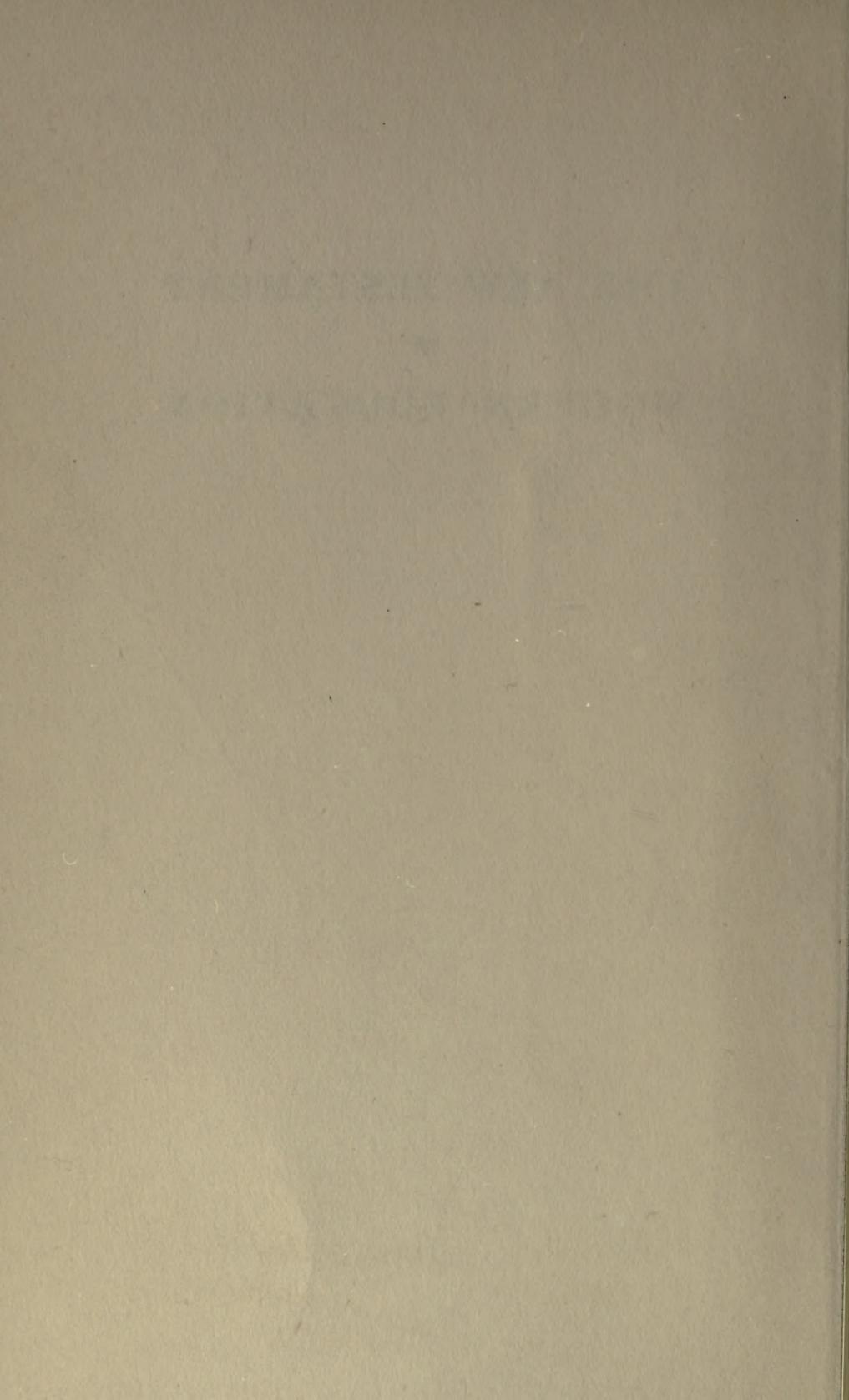


THE NEW TESTAMENT  
IN  
MODERN EDUCATION



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# THE NEW TESTAMENT IN MODERN EDUCATION

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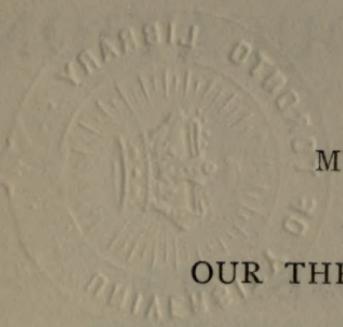
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184160  
20.9.23.

HODDER AND STOUGHTON  
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LONDON



TO  
MY WIFE  
AND TO  
OUR THREE CHILDREN

## P R E F A C E

RECENT events have undoubtedly brought a great increase of interest in the significance of Morality and Religion for Education. The Science and Art of religious Education are, however, still in their infancy. The most fundamental problems still await scientific discussion and a practical solution. The specific features of the educational ideal, the definite value and application of psychological study and its results—both personal and social—the educational significance of Religion and Theology, the relation between Home, School and Church as educational agencies, and many similar questions still represent difficulties that have not been overcome.

Rather unfortunately, almost exclusive attention has been given to the elaboration of educational methods, to the comparative neglect of the content and material of moral and religious instruction. The latter, however, must become our primary study, for *how* we teach must in the end depend upon *what we want* to teach.

So far the Bible—and that the mediaeval Bible—has been taken for granted in educational discussion, but in reality it presents a problem of ultimate significance. After all, why should we, in the schools of the twentieth century, teach, as an important element in our instruction, the literature and history of an ancient Semitic race or the fugitive writings of a little group of Hellenistic religious enthusiasts of the first century? On the face of it such a question demands a far more thorough and scientific discussion than has yet been given to it. Our very right to live comfortably in the modern world as distinguished from the Middle Ages depends upon the answer we give to it.

The following chapters are intended as a contribution to this initial educational discussion of the Biblical material in so far as it concerns the New Testament. The first part of the book deals with the relation between religious and modern education generally; with the results and significance of modern Biblical study for the teacher; with the educational interpretation of the material of the New Testament; with its place and use in the process of

education ; and with the specific task of the teacher of the New Testament. The second part discusses the main particular problems involved in teaching the New Testament—dealing in turn with the Life, Personality and Teaching of Jesus Christ (special chapters being devoted to the Parables and the Miracles) ; with the Life and Letters of the Apostle Paul and with the Johannine Literature, while the last chapter attempts to summarize the meaning of the whole discussion and to give a comprehensive appreciation of the specific educational values of the New Testament in relation to the needs and interests of our modern world.

Among the needs of the day is the need for intelligent mediators between the Biblical expert and the educational thinker—mediators who will also attempt to interpret both these to the studious practical teacher. It will be seen that it is to this region that the following discussions belong. They all attempt to make some vital connection between the Christian Gospel of the New Testament as interpreted by Biblical scholars, and modern educational efforts in principle and practice.

Naturally, no claim to originality is made for discussions of this kind, but it is hoped that they reveal throughout some intimate knowledge of what the scientific educators and of what the scientific theologians have to say. It is hoped that they also show the influence of a fairly long and useful experience of the actual difficulties and needs of modern teachers in the public schools, the Sunday Schools and other educational institutions.

I am glad of the opportunity to acknowledge my debt to American writers like Dr. Stanley Hall and Professor G. A. Coe, as well as to numerous German writings, especially those of Professor F. Niebergall of Heidelberg. Much of the substance of two or three of the following chapters was published some years ago in *The Christian Commonwealth*, and I thank the proprietors for their kind consent to make use of it here. Some parts of the opening chapters were delivered as lectures at the Summer School of Biblical Instruction held at the Normal College, Bangor, in 1920. I feel very much indebted also to my friends, Principal Rees of the Independent College, Bangor, and the Rev. H. Harris-Hughes, Bangor, for reading the manuscript and for making many useful corrections and suggestions.

INDEPENDENT COLLEGE,  
BANGOR,

5th August 1922.

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## PART I

### THE NEW TESTAMENT IN MODERN EDUCATION

- I. THE CHRISTIAN TEACHER AND MODERN EDUCATION.
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- VI. THE CHRISTIAN TEACHER AND HIS TASK.

## CHAPTER I

### THE CHRISTIAN TEACHER AND MODERN EDUCATION

1. *Introductory.*—Christianity and the Modern Educational Movement.
2. *Educational Principles.*—Psychological Basis—Periods of Moral and Religious Growth—The Moral Aim of Education—The Christian Ideal—The Value of Systematic Instruction—The Place of Religion in Education.
3. *Educational Methods.*—The Impressionist School—The Method of Systematic Presentation—The Method of Questioning—The Need of Variety in Methods—The Need of a New Spirit.

#### I

### INTRODUCTORY

It is only upon the background of Education in general that the place and significance of instruction in the New Testament can be properly appreciated. Life is one, and we must strive to gather all our educational efforts into some kind of unity. We fail indeed to appreciate one of the main contributions of Religion and of the New Testament if we miss their power to unify all life and education. On the other hand, the Christian teacher who does not bring his task into effective contact with the store of inspiration gathered for him by the modern educational movement starves himself in the land of plenty and devitalizes his material. He needs the modern educator as well as the Biblical scholar before he can fully enter into his own proper heritage. They also need what the Christian teacher alone can give them before they can find and perform their proper function in life.

It is true that the voice of the great educators has often been smothered by the exigencies of politics and by the bickerings of the sects. In spite of that, however, their

united message has become the common heritage of all civilized lands. All appearances to the contrary, there does now exist a more or less coherent body of educational principles to which all intelligent teachers confess their willing obedience, and which provides a working basis for all future effort.

What is curious, if not tragic, in the history of modern education is that though this body of principles owes far more to the inspiration of the New Testament than to any other cause, yet it is the organized educational institutions of Christianity itself that have come least of all under the broadening influences of the great educators. On the other hand, it is quite as true that modern education has not yet by any means exhausted the inspiration which the Christian Gospel both in itself and in its history is capable of contributing to the common task of training men and nations.

There is therefore a twofold task before the Christian Church in this connection. One is the task of assimilating modern educational principles and methods for the purposes of religious instruction. The other is the task of using the Christian Gospel more and more for the purpose of enriching the principles and practice of education in general.

This discussion therefore starts with the willing confession that for us the fundamental principles which have sprung from the thought and activities of the great educators possess a general validity. Many of these principles have found rough expression in such well-known catch-phrases as 'respect for personality,' 'development from within,' 'development all round,' 'freedom through obedience,' 'many-sided interest,' 'learning by doing,' 'the concrete before the abstract,' 'no impression without expression,' 'educative instruction,' and many others of a similar character. It is true that these have been gathered from almost all schools of educational thought—whose most enthusiastic disciples are still quarrelling over their exclusive claims to attention. The sober-minded teacher will, however, be ready to welcome them all as valuable contributions to the Science and Art of Education, and will give to none of them the exclusive

right to dominate his theory and practice. As catch-words they are useful to remind him of the many varied elements that must enter into the process of making men and women. It has already been suggested that there is a definite historical reason why such principles and methods as these phrases imply should be more directly and effectively applicable to the teaching of morality and religion than to any other part of education. They have, as a matter of fact, been almost all directly suggested by the Christian Gospel itself.

## 2

## EDUCATIONAL PRINCIPLES

Some of these principles as being most germane to our purpose require a fuller discussion and definition. They concern the psychological basis of education, its moral end, the value of instruction and the central place of religion in it.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL BASIS OF EDUCATION

1. There is no matter with regard to which we can count upon such general agreement as the appeal to human nature for guidance in the formulation of educational principles and methods. Nothing is so characteristic of modern education as the earnestness, persistence and enthusiasm with which it has carried on the study of the nature and growth of the child—physically, intellectually and spiritually. If anything, its trust in the infallibility of the results of its psychological studies is in danger of becoming too absolute. We have not been reminded too often that we must know 'John' thoroughly, if we want to teach him 'Latin.' There has, however, been some danger of forgetting that we must also know 'Latin,' and that no amount of psychological study will provide us with the intellectual material or the moral ideal with which we want to bring 'John' into effective contact. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that child-study in

all its aspects represents by far the most fruitful factor in the triumph of the modern educational movement, and that in the results of that study, in spite of some vagaries, a vast amount of authentic material is now available for effective use in the practice of education.

The study has already been and will be more and more a very healthy influence in the region of moral and religious instruction. We now fully realize, or we ought, at any rate, to have fully realized that it is neither the teacher nor the theology, neither the Church nor the Bible which should have the primary consideration, but the need and capacity of the child. The religious teacher, like every other, must reckon with heredity, temperament, varied capacities and interests. The soul is amenable to influence, and it is true that even ordinary people are capable of far greater things in the moral and religious life than we have dreamt. That, however, does not alter the fact that we cannot make a prophet or a religious genius at our will, any more than we can make a great musician or a great painter. We must not teach as if we expected all our pupils to reach the same high level of moral and religious experience as Paul or Augustine or Luther, nor must we expect them all to repeat the same type of experience. The Christian teacher is dealing with the same limitations set by heredity, temperament and capacity as all other teachers. He is also making use of the same psychological processes, while the formal educative movements of the inner life are much the same, whatever may be the ultimate end in view. The results of psychological study in these regions, the teacher of the New Testament must accept in common with all other teachers.

#### PERIODS OF MORAL AND RELIGIOUS GROWTH

It has also become clear that the child, in morality and religion as in all other aspects of his life, passes through definite and well-marked stages of growth and development in capacity and need. Before maturity is reached, the growing soul passes through three different levels of life which are often said with some truth to

correspond more or less roughly with the gradual development of the race. They are *Infancy* (up to about seven years of age), *Childhood* (from about seven to twelve or thirteen) and *Adolescence* (lasting up to about twenty-four or twenty-five and often longer). The general features of these periods are also well known. We are here concerned with them only in so far as they bear more or less directly upon moral and religious instruction. From this point of view they are the wonder, the imitative and play instincts of Infancy; the imagination and curiosity, the receptive memory, the personal interest, the growing historical sense, the demand for uniformity and the growing conscience of Childhood; the self-assertion, the social interest, the greater intellectual understanding and hero-worship; the storm and stress, the reflection and idealism; the constructive thought and sense of responsibility of Adolescence in its successive stages of early (twelve to fifteen), middle (fifteen to eighteen) and late (eighteen to twenty-four) youth.

This educational Psychology has also brought a good deal of insight into the processes which are involved in the direction of instincts, the formation of habits, the growth of knowledge, the training of the moral judgment and the control of the will, though we have a long way yet to go before we can walk with any certainty in some of these directions.

It is clear, therefore, that the organized agencies of moral and religious education, both in their ideals and methods, as well as in the use they make of the material at their disposal, lag far behind even our present imperfect scientific knowledge of child-life. A very great deal, however, still remains to be done before we have laid broad and firm the psychological basis of moral and religious education. To understand and make effective use of the needs and interests and values that dominate the lives of modern youths and adults in Church and out of it, in the town and in the country, in the Trade Union and in the office, at work, at school and at play will require a much more comprehensive, accurate and patient psychological study than has yet been dreamed of. We are really only at the very beginning of an educational

psychology in any scientific sense. At its best, however, we must guard against making a fetish of child-study and its developments, for it can by no means give us everything that we need for our task. There will always be a margin of unexpectedness about the individual child which our general and average formulæ will not cover, and which we must learn patiently to know and to value for itself in each case. Child-study may help us to enumerate and classify the motives, the interests, capacities and needs to which we can appeal. It may reveal to us the different reactions to be expected in answer to the influences we bring to bear upon the child or youth. It may enable us to analyse more and more accurately and fully the various elements and steps in the educative process. It may thus help us to realize that whatever end we may propose for our education must conform to certain fundamental characteristics of human nature, but it cannot possibly provide us with that end itself. It may give us guidance with regard to the forms into which we can put that end, but its real content we must get in some other way and by a far wider sweep than any mere Psychology can take. We must never be tempted to believe that we can spin out the aim and the moral ideal of education out of a mere analysis of the psychological processes.

In fact, Education is not a circle with one centre, but an ellipse with two foci—one of which is represented by the child, and the other the end for which he is to be trained. They, of course, must correspond with each other. That is why education can never be adequately described in terms of mere natural development, and we can never get rid of the element of direction and control from above, be the control as congenial and as unobtrusive as it may. The discussion of the ultimate end of education, therefore, is to some extent at least an independent study, and must have a place of its own in the Science of Education.

#### THE MORAL AIM OF EDUCATION

2. Modern educators are by this time in general agreement with regard to the moral nature of the ultimate aim

in view. They would probably be ready to describe it as the formation and sustenance not simply of a full, rich, ideal human character, but rather of a fully developed, free personality in the case of each pupil—a personality developed to the fullest extent, variety and wealth, of which the general and individual nature of each pupil is capable as a member of the human community. As usually expressed, this description requires more accurate definition, if not also an enlargement of its scope, to make it of real use. It is lacking in substance and content. We are at once brought face to face with the critical question of what *kind* of character and what *type* of personality our education is supposed to promote and guard. It is here that we are in urgent need of guidance, and it is here that most modern educational discussion leaves us in the lurch, and it is here also that we begin to hear the vital challenge of the Christian Religion.

The prevalent idea seems to be that the ideal must of necessity be of this vague character, and that each individual must somehow or other choose his own ideal. The truth of this is, of course, that the educational aim must be plastic enough to allow of the utmost variety. It must, however, be variety within the range of some unity however wide, or it will become meaningless and dissolve into nothing. The real fact is that behind every fresh development of the Science of Education there has been a fairly consistent view of the character of the ideal even when it did not attain to definite expression. Still more is it the case that every great system of practical education has been consciously or unconsciously based upon some very definite conception of the ideal life and its qualities. It must always be so, whether educational theory provides such an ideal or not. Unfortunately, what has happened is that in the absence of any thorough discussion of the comparative value of conflicting ethical ideals, educational practice has seldom risen above the level of 'the good patriot,' 'the good citizen,' 'the good workman,' 'the English gentleman,' 'the good Catholic' or 'the good Protestant.'

Now, the vital challenge of the Christian Gospel and the New Testament to modern education is that they do

actually provide an ideal of personality and character, capable of universal application, comprehensive enough to serve as the ultimate moral aim of all education. It is revealed, on the one hand, in the personality and character of Jesus Christ, and, on the other hand, in the Kingdom of God, combining in one coherent whole both the individual and the social aspects of the moral ideal.

### THE CHRISTIAN IDEAL

Here also we cannot, it is true, avoid the conflict of interpretation, but that conflict itself is in fact only an added tribute to the educational value of the Christian standard, for what its history essentially reveals is the possibility of an ever-renewed application of the personality of Jesus and the life of the Kingdom to the need and capacity of age after age. It is one of the great tasks of the Christian Church to think and live itself more and more fully into the variety of that interpretation and application, as it must become one of the tasks of the modern educator to use its material to fill with richer content the empty forms in which he is apt to present the ultimate end of education. If the formation of character and the growth of personality or a society of personalities are to take their place effectively as the final end of education, the problem of the kind of character and the type of personality which are worth perpetuating must more and more secure the concentrated attention of educational thinkers. It is certainly the bounden duty of the Christian teacher to secure the adoption of the personal spirit of Jesus and the Kingdom of God as the ultimate end of all education. To succeed in such a task he will have to meet at least two elementary conditions :

(a) He must be prepared to analyse the spirit and life of Jesus and the Kingdom in such a way as to distinguish between those elements in all historical presentations of them which were merely temporary and those which can lay claim to some permanent validity.

(b) He must be ready to recognize the existence and partial validity of a large number of subsidiary educational aims, which he must be able to co-ordinate and organize

into a system with the ultimate end as its centre and final sanction. Somehow or other, in order to maintain its supreme sway, the ultimate ideal proposed must include in itself and justify all other legitimate and worthy aims. The Christian teacher has no right to propose the Christian ideal as a standard unless he is able to show how it coheres with and includes such well-established educational aims as earning a living, gaining knowledge, self-realization, harmonious development, moral character and social efficiency.

There is therefore a great deal of work still to do before it can be said that either Christian or general educational thinking has exhausted the possibilities of discussion with regard to the ultimate end of education. Its problems must always be borne in mind by the teacher of the New Testament.

The recent and increasing tendency among both philosophers and theologians following in the footsteps of the economists to express the meaning of life and the world in terms of 'value' ought to be a great help to the fruitful discussion of such questions as these. The fresh category of 'value'—intrinsic and instrumental—is being used more and more extensively in all ethical, philosophical and even metaphysical discussions, and may yet provide the common ground so much needed in order to approach the solution of such central problems as the ultimate end of education and its content.

#### THE VALUE OF SYSTEMATIC INSTRUCTION

3. We come to a somewhat different question when we deal with the exact value of systematic instruction in the general process of education, and especially of education in morality and religion. It is still the subject of somewhat heated controversy. The old confusion between education and instruction is now largely a thing of the past. The organization of personal intercourse and experience, and indeed of the whole environment of the pupil, has found its own special place alongside of systematic instruction. The disciples of Herbart are, of course, the most enthusiastic sponsors of definite and direct systematic

instruction, and especially of 'educative' instruction as central and essential to any efficient system of education. The insistence on the fact that instruction may have a definite formative moral value represents one of the great services of Herbart in the history of modern education. By this is meant that some ideas, when presented in the proper way and at the proper time, can and do become living forces in the formation of character. They acquire power to create spontaneously and almost automatically feelings of living interest, to grip the mind and to direct as well as to strengthen the will. Certain kinds of knowledge given in the right way and at the right time can produce a moral and religious change. It is difficult to see how that can legitimately be denied. We may add, it is true, that though instruction may have a value of its own, if it is of the right kind, yet it is never fully and morally effective apart from the spontaneous self-activity of the pupil, the personality of the teacher and the organization of the environment.

It is true also that before any satisfactory and satisfying conclusion can be reached with regard to the value of instruction as a means of education, we stand in need of a much more thorough investigation of such problems as the following : What kind of ideas or principles or convictions or knowledge has naturally or can acquire this formative power ? Why and how does instruction become 'educative' ? By what process does an idea become an ideal ?

Herbart's analysis of the process of Apperception and his doctrine of Interest reveal some important links in the chain which connects the idea with the will ; but, generally speaking, it may be said that the specific value of instruction is taken for granted rather than realized in detail by the educational Psychologists. If the great motive which leads to moral activity is a sense of value in some 'good,' then ideas become educative in so far as they represent 'values'—intrinsic or instrumental—and only by some systematic instruction can any adequate knowledge be brought of these values and ideals as well as of the various ways and means of reaching them. Definite instruction provides also the only means of en-

larging the narrow range of personal experience and intercourse ; and since perception without conception is blind and wayward, it provides the only means also of using systematic thought for the necessary interpretation of experience.

These and other similar observations seem to rule out of court the theories of all those who seem prepared to banish all definite and systematic instruction from the teaching of morality and religion, and the teacher of the New Testament can still remain confident that he is betraying no educational principles when he is using its material for the direct and indirect presentation of moral and spiritual values, as well as of the means of reaching them.

#### THE PLACE OF RELIGION IN EDUCATION

4. It is now almost universally recognized that religion in its deepest and broadest sense is an important, if not a central, constituent in all effective education. It is so because religion is a primary fact in human nature and history—" an entirely natural product of the human soul in its intercourse with the material world and with other souls." This statement, however, requires to be qualified in several ways before it can yet be claimed as an effective confession of modern education.

In many cases, though based upon undoubted psychological and historical facts, the recognition of religion amounts to little more than a formal acknowledgment without any very strenuous attempt to make practical application of the principle. Even where religious instruction may take an important place in the curriculum, it remains more often than not a mere excrescence. Seldom indeed is any serious attempt made to bring religion into any vital co-ordination with the teaching as a whole, with the result that a position of 'splendid isolation' becomes merely another name for a degrading ineffectiveness. This failure is, of course, due quite as much to the persistent intellectual and practical dualism of religious teachers as to the lack of educational thoroughness.

The educational attitude towards religion suffers also from a persistent vagueness in the use of the term, corresponding to the vagueness in the definition of the moral aim of education which has already been referred to. It is true that there is a religious spirit and attitude behind and beyond every particular form of religion, but that spirit does not exist in and for itself without definite expression in one of the many types of religious life and character. It cannot be cultivated *in vacuo*, but always in and through one or other of these types. The challenge of Christianity to modern education is that for its purposes there cannot be found a higher and more comprehensive form of the religious life and spirit than that which is incorporated in the Christian Gospel and the New Testament.

We need to be reminded also that this acknowledgment of religion by the modern educator does not settle, and is not intended to settle, the question of when and where 'religious instruction' should be given—whether as definite lessons or through the ordinary subjects of literature or history or science, whether by the State or by the Church or by both. It does imply, however, that whenever or wherever or by whomsoever it may be given, it must be in relation to and co-ordinate with that whole system of values which education in general is intended to promote. It is also implied that it is always the business of the educator to recognize that religion is a primary and essential factor in the making of men and women, and that it is a part of his task to see that full and proper provision is made in the general education of the nation for the training of the religious side and for the satisfaction of the religious needs of human nature. It is his business also to suggest the best and most effective material for that purpose. And here the question with which we are really concerned is how far and in what sense the New Testament is capable of supplying that need.

## EDUCATIONAL METHODS

## MODERN EDUCATIONAL METHODS

This discussion of the educational heritage of which the Christian teacher is the natural heir would not be complete without some reference to the expert guidance which is at his disposal for the task of organizing his material and transmitting it in the most effective way. He is, of course, not called upon nor expected to apply slavishly to morality and religion the particular methods of modern teachers of other subjects. It is the general principles underlying all particular methods that he needs, first of all, to assimilate. On the other hand, he must not forget that in dealing with the Bible he is also dealing with what is essentially the material of Literature and History—and that the experts in teaching these subjects have a great deal to teach him too with regard to the educational interpretation of his material and its proper grading for different ages, and also with regard to the form, arrangement and presentation of his material. But the expert advice must always be adapted to the peculiar character and characteristics of the Biblical Literature and History with which the Christian teacher is definitely dealing.

Up till very recently the method that dominated all education and instruction was that of an almost mechanical memorizing. The teacher simply acted as the transmitter of the stuff—his business being to put it into the form most suitable for its effective gripping of the verbal memory. This, at any rate, describes the method in its extreme form.

By this time the pendulum has swung completely over to the other extreme in the Montessori method; and though it may be blasphemy to suggest such a thing, a malicious opponent might be led to say that we have here a signal instance of how extremes meet. In both the oldest and the newest method the teacher does not teach, but simply stands by watching the child learn.

In very different forms both extremes reveal an almost incredible credulity with regard to the unaided capacity of the human young to teach himself if he is left alone.

Such a view, however, would represent only a very superficial and popular interpretation or misrepresentation of Dr. Montessori's almost unique services to the Science and Art of Education. If the Montessori teacher can afford to 'stand and wait'—acting as a kind of living reference book, only to be used in emergencies—that is because his work has already been done thoroughly in the selection and organization of the whole environment of the child. The mere possibility of such a misrepresentation, however, may serve as a warning to the unwary when they are tempted superficially to imitate a genius.

The valuable experiments of Dr. Montessori are undoubtedly destined to exercise a very healthy influence upon the whole conception of education; but so far as the teaching of morality and religion is concerned, they are only at their preliminary stage. They may before long challenge the right of definite and systematic instruction in morality and religion, as they have already shown the need for a radical reconsideration and reorganization of the environment now provided by religious institutions. We are not yet, however, in a position to discuss the relation of the Montessori method to the teaching of the older children and adolescents, with which we are here mainly concerned.

In any case, we must not let this universal reaction against the mechanical memorizing of the past blind us to the fact that there is a place for the appeal to the memory. In its own place and under proper conditions that appeal is an essential element in any well-ordered system of instruction. All effective education, in fact, depends upon it. The claim of modern methods is that they *do* store the memory with what is needed for the guidance of life, and with far richer resources than any mechanical learning by rote can ever do. It is very probable also that the reaction even against mechanical memorizing has gone too far.

## THE IMPRESSIONIST SCHOOL OF METHOD

Apart from this, the main educational methods at present in vogue fall into three main types. Rather exclusive claims have been sometimes made on behalf of each of these, but as a matter of fact they are not inconsistent with one another. They may be called respectively the Impressionist, the Constructive and the Argumentative School of Method. The Impressionist method implies that the teacher is an artist whose delight is in depicting vivid and dramatic scenes with a lavish and loving brush. His business is to arouse active sentiments of wonder, admiration and love by fixing living pictures in the mind. He aims at reaching the will mainly through the imagination and the emotions. Hence his cry is for story-telling, more story-telling and still more story-telling. He makes the bread of stories out of wood and stone, and one would not be surprised to find mathematical tables at any time become changed under the magic wand into a fairy tale or a heroic saga. The story-telling teacher takes pleasure in enlarging upon his theme and working out its incidents in elaborate detail—rich in colour and glowing in tone. He works both for large effects and deep impressions. Sometimes it is claimed that this artistic method can cover almost the whole range of instruction; but most naturally it finds in history, nature, morality and religion its own chosen field.

It must readily be granted that the Impressionist teacher has built up his theory, which has been put here in its extremer form, upon the solid basis of psychology and experience. We all love a good story, and it is one of the most effective instruments known to us for gripping the interest and so directing the will. To acquire the art of story-telling, therefore, must always be one of the main tasks of the teacher. We shall see also that the material of the New Testament is of such a character as not only to be susceptible to this method of treatment, but even to demand story-telling for the effective transmission of a great deal of it.

There is no doubt, also, that for the ages of wonder

and imagination in infancy and early childhood there is no substitute at all for the well-told story.

Its danger, however, is that it may very easily defeat its own purpose. The attention is apt to be attracted by so many vivid details, and the interest gripped by so many strong and concrete images, that it requires a very sure artistic touch to preserve the unity of the impression. Except on the very highest levels of story-telling, some element other than the sheer artistic desire to tell a story well and fully seems necessary in order to make the story into an effective method of teaching.

### THE METHOD OF SYSTEMATIC PRESENTATION

It is the endeavour to provide that element in a scientific way that justifies and marks what we have called the Constructive School of Method. It also may make an extensive use of story-telling, but the story as such does not really represent the genius of this method, which is mainly associated with Herbart and his disciples. Its essential feature is the attempt to influence the will by setting in motion the process of apperception in the mind, thus creating a new circle of thought with which and in which Interest is inextricably bound up. It is the Interest thus created that is supposed to control the will. Herbart himself analysed the way in which the mind thus goes to work into the four formal steps of clearness, association, system and method. This analysis has since been modified and amplified by his followers into the 'five formal steps' of Preparation (with a Statement of the Aim as a sub-step), Presentation, Comparison, Generalization and Application. According to the theory, it is the business of the teacher to see that the mind passes through these steps, and for the devout Herbartian it is pretty certain that the only way to secure this result is to 'build up' the material of instruction itself on these lines. The teacher is therefore essentially a builder, first of all of his material and through that of the mind. All this was applied by Herbart himself only to large masses of material and groups of lessons, but it is now very generally applied to the construction of single lessons—

with more artificiality and less effect. It is an interesting experiment to group the whole material of the New Testament in accordance with the Herbartian formulæ.

The merits of this method are very evident, and its influence upon moral and religious instruction has been a very healthy one. It keeps before us the ideal of moulding the material of instruction into one organic whole. It does not allow the teacher to run away from his task for a single moment. It emphasizes the importance and character of the material itself and implies a thorough mastery of its content and form in detail. It binds the teacher to a constant contact with the actual psychological process, which must be set in motion by his presentation of the material. In the main, the formal steps represent a natural and fairly accurate analysis of that process.

On the other hand, the defects and dangers of the constructive method must not be overlooked. The relation between the process of apperception and the decision of the will is not always what the method implies. The possession of a 'circle of thought' is no guarantee of the moral activity that corresponds with it. The whole process from beginning to end is defined far too exclusively in intellectual terms and far too much as the mechanical working of a machine which only requires the touch of a knob to set it going. Neither is it quite certain that the best way to set it going is always to imitate the formal steps involved in the process itself. The working of the human mind cannot be quite so logical and perform such clean-cuts as the formal steps imply. The application of the same rigid procedure to the construction of each lesson in an endless series must often involve an artificial sticking-on of labels to material that does not naturally conform to type.

This constructive method, therefore, with all its merits and attractions, cannot legitimately make any exclusive claims upon the teacher. It is an excellent servant, but may become a bad master. What is probable is that, modified and qualified by a more thorough and less mechanical psychology, it is the most helpful method yet found for the teaching of late childhood and early adolescence especially.

### THE METHOD OF QUESTIONING

The third or the argumentative method represents a still more direct appeal to the intellect and a still greater dependence upon the intellect for the direction of the will. It represents the old and familiar question-and-answer method which has been stereotyped in the Church Catechism. It is a variation of the method of teaching associated with the name of Socrates. In spite or perhaps because of its familiarity, this method of instruction has not received from modern educators the scientific attention it ought. Essentially it is an attempt logically to deduce principles from facts, or to apply principles to new facts by a series of well-framed questions, inviting the pupils themselves to carry through the whole process by their answers.

Here the teacher is an explorer and guide rather than a builder or an artist. He attempts to make the pupil feel that it is he himself who is doing the work. The teacher is only giving him an opportunity, as it were, to discover the truth for himself. We have here once again one of the main elements of instruction, the efficiency of which depends upon the development of the art of skilful questioning. The whole method taken by itself implies, of course, a great deal of faith in the logical power of the youthful mind, and it is very difficult to conceive any very extensive use of it by itself as an independent method of instruction. It is probable, however, that teachers have been too prone to underestimate the intellectual and logical capacities of late childhood and early adolescence, and the revival of a method of this kind in a more scientific form may yet lead to very fruitful results. The traditional disconnected and haphazard questioning is, of course, only an abuse. It is true that the preparation for giving instruction by this method cannot be so rigid and elaborate in detail as in the case of story-telling. The material must be under control in a somewhat elastic form, for the answers to questions cannot always be anticipated. That, however, only means that the preparation must be all the more thorough, while the demand upon the alertness of the teacher at the moment is far greater.

Here, again, the truth seems to be that a method of this kind is specially adapted for the teaching of middle and late adolescence, and only in a subordinate place for the instruction of childhood.

These seem to be the chief types of methods at the disposal of the teacher of the New Testament. He will do well not to pin his faith to any one of them, and refuse to bow to any exclusive claims made on their behalf. They will help to convince him that he must learn the art of effective story-telling, the art of clear, systematic and unified presentation of his material, and the art of skilful questioning.

#### NEED OF VARIETY IN METHOD

Starting from the value of these, he will probably find that his main stand-by for infancy and early childhood will be story-telling in all its forms ; presentation on more or less Herbartian lines for late childhood and early adolescence ; and questioning for the later periods. His experience will also probably show him that his choice of any one of these methods or any combination of them will come to depend upon the character of the material with which he happens to be dealing. Individual incidents, personal history, biographical records and imaginative material will naturally take the form of stories. Studies in character and personality, the record of social groups, the transmission of moral experience and the intellectual content of life will require the aid of the Herbartian or some similar systematic positive presentation ; while the discovery and formulation of general principles and their application will require the more argumentative method. This, however, is only a very rough division of his material, and the teacher must be ready to adopt very varied combinations of methods at all stages, according to the call of his subject-matter and the particular capacities of his pupils.

In the end, what is to be hoped for is that the teacher will discover for himself just that particular variety of any one or all of these methods as his very own and learn to depend upon it as his mainstay.

Such, then, as regards general principles and methods, is the educational situation into which must be inserted the task of teaching the New Testament in the modern world. It is a privilege to enter into the rich heritage it represents and to make faithful answer to its urgent demands. It is very humiliating to realize how ineffective so far has been the response of the Christian Church as a whole. As an educational institution, no one will venture to claim that it is at present doing its work in any satisfactory way. Whether its educational purpose be considered as giving a knowledge of the Bible, or obtaining converts, or transmitting a knowledge of what Christianity means, or producing strong Christian men and women ; whether we consider the education it provides, the instruction it imparts or the methods it adopts ; whether we consider its buildings, its equipment or its staffing—unfortunately there is no one who will or can claim anything like efficiency for its work. The whole organized education of the Church lacks life—newness of life, driving power, the power of the Spirit that maketh all things new. And it can find what it lacks only in one way—in a baptism, and that a baptism by total immersion into the overflowing spirit of its own Gospel first, and then into the purest ideals and principles of modern education. We must somehow win the faith that by the grace of God we have been entrusted with a large measure of real power deliberately to mould human souls, and that God is leading us more and more to discover how to do it effectively.

Such is essentially the religious faith of modern education. We must see that it is also the educational faith of the Christian Church.

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## CHAPTER II

### THE NEW TESTAMENT AND THE CHRISTIAN TEACHER

1. *The Study of the New Testament.*—Modern Biblical Criticism—The External Characteristics of the New Testament—Its Contents—Different Levels of Thought—The Peculiar Contribution of the New Testament—Summary.
2. *The Need of Trained Teachers.*—The Training of Teachers—Their Need of a Critical Study of the Bible.
3. *The Teacher's Attitude.*—Two Questions Involved—The Moral Demand—Need of a Consistent Attitude—Mediaeval *v.* Modern Methods—The Attitude of the Great Preachers—The Needs of the Ordinary Teacher—The Parting of the Ways.

#### I

### THE STUDY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

A BAPTISM into the best spirit and principles of the great modern educators is capable of pouring new life into the moribund body of the moral and religious education of the Church, and, as we have seen, it is in an indirect way a baptism into the spirit and principles of the Christian Gospel. Naturally, however, we shall find a far more direct way into the heart of the same Gospel in every fresh literary, historical and religious study of the New Testament.

#### MODERN BIBLICAL CRITICISM

This is not the place to enter upon the history of the interpretation of the New Testament during the second half of the last century—from the days of Strauss and Baur through Westcott, Hort and Lightfoot, down to the days of Sanday, Harnack, Jülicher, Bousset and Johannes Weiss. As a whole, it is probably the history of one of the most thorough intellectual processes in the story of

the race. Every book, every chapter, every phrase and every word in the New Testament have been under the critical microscope many times from almost every point of view. The work has been done with almost absolute freedom, running sometimes into licence and sometimes into the most utter disregard for the practical results, good or bad, which might follow for Christianity and the Church. All the more significant, therefore, is the undoubted fact that what is practically a consensus of scholarly opinion has now been reached with regard to the origin, nature and history of the books of the New Testament. So far, at any rate, as the teacher or the preacher is concerned, the differences between scholars are not of much account. The conception of the New Testament is now clear in all its main outlines and in most of its details. To this, the Christian teacher must adjust himself and his work, sooner or later, and the sooner the better.

We cannot hide from ourselves the fact that it is a New Testament very different from that which was in the hands of the teacher a century ago. Of the traditional theory or dogma about the Bible not a fragment has been left standing. An entirely new building stands on the site and in the place of the old, though it is true that many stones from the old house have been used in the reconstruction. It is especially necessary for the teacher at this point to be quite clear as to what that really means.

In its logical and extreme form, the traditional idea of the Bible was that of a miraculous, absolute, objective and consistent Revelation throughout, given directly by God in a supernatural way, written at His dictation and preserved by supernatural means.

In and for itself it was God's final word for all time. In form, origin and history it was taken to be so. From beginning to end it was a complete and consistent system of divine truth. This was the dogma of the Bible in its logical form. Every word was equally infallible and equally authoritative. Every word meant something important in a religious and Christian sense.

Of course, no one did—no one ever could—carry out

such a theory consistently into practice. We must not, however, forget that so long as it was consciously or subconsciously accepted by the teacher and his pupils, it did supply in a marvellous way their greatest needs for authority and for a final court of appeal. It was, however, a theory that might be shattered in a moment by any one who dared to employ his critical judgment upon it. That was what naturally did happen in course of time. The New Testament as well as the Old was, after a long struggle, claimed as a proper subject for the same kind of study as was given to other literature and by the same methods. The consequences of this critical study we must be prepared to accept frankly for the sake of teaching the New Testament effectively. It is, however, not the individual results in detail that concern us here so much as the final effect upon our general view of the New Testament as a whole in its origin, character and form. What, then, is the New Testament as we have it in our hands to-day ?

### THE EXTERNAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

#### 1. With regard to its external characteristics :

(a) The New Testament is a collection of early Christian writings, miscellaneous in form, including collections of biographical anecdotes of the Christian leaders, private letters, semi-formal epistles and several other types of literature common in their time. They were written by Christians to one another and some perhaps to outsiders on matters relating to the new religion.

(b) The New Testament, however, is not merely a haphazard collection, but a selection from a larger mass of Christian writings, belonging approximately to the first century after the death of Jesus Christ. This selection was not deliberately made on one principle. The New Testament writings are not all earlier than other Christian writings. They are not different in their form. They are not all apostolic in their origin. Their selection was not one deliberate act, but the result of a long process carried on by different Churches in different places and

from different motives. The New Testament came into being by a process of natural selection and survival, and it was only the last step, and that a formal one, which was taken by the Church Councils.

(c) So far as all external characteristics are concerned, no difference can be traced between the writings of the New Testament and those of their time and age outside. In language, origin, literary forms, history and preservation they underwent the same fortunes and misfortunes as the other books which have come down to us—until they were definitely elevated into the Sacred Canon of the Church.

Externally, therefore, we have before us a natural, human, historical and literary growth. The books are human products which scholars have succeeded in putting back into their setting in the literature, history, thought and language of the first two centuries.

Whether and how far what the early Christians had to say to one another in and through these writings is a Word or the Word of God to us is a matter upon which literary and historical study as such can pass no direct judgment. It is not within its province to do so. To call the New Testament inspired or revealed can only be a judgment upon the value of its content, and it is independent of its form and the process through which it came. Whatever special moral or religious value there may be in the New Testament writings, it is clear that that value is not derived from and cannot depend upon either their literary origin or their history, upon their external characteristics or the method of their preservation and collection—but only upon the character of their contents, the life from which they sprang and the effects they produce.

2. We are therefore driven back more definitely than ever before upon the character of the contents of the New Testament.

(a) Although no hard and fast distinction can any longer be drawn externally between early Christian writings inside and outside the Canon, yet the choice of the books which we have now in the New Testament has been fully justified on the merits of their contents.

They are the documents which are most typical of the early Christian movement itself, and which are of most importance in estimating the character and value of that movement. It is true that Luther called the Epistle of James "an epistle of straw, for there is nothing evangelical in it," but that was a very hasty judgment on his part. It might also be argued that the Epistle of Barnabas, the first Epistle of Clement and the Letters of Ignatius ought to have been included, but it would tax the ingenuity of the critic to decide whether they are superior or equal in value to any New Testament writings. It must also be confessed that the boundary between the canonical and the extra-canonical books nearest to them was for long very uncertain.

#### THE CONTENTS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

In spite of all this, however, the right of the New Testament to represent the meaning of Early Christianity still stands firm. While the reasons given originally in each case for placing individual books inside or outside the Canon cannot always be endorsed, yet the verdict of the Early Church as to the supreme value of the New Testament as a whole, compared with all the other writings of the time, has been amply confirmed. We can therefore be sure that when we are dealing with these writings we are at the heart of the Christian movement.

(b) It has also been clearly revealed to us by this time that in purpose and nature every part of the contents of the New Testament is essentially occasional and practical. Even the fixing of the Canon was not really the work of the great Councils. It was the free choice of the Christian Churches to meet their practical needs for Christian edification and instruction. Every book was written with a definite practical purpose—even the Epistle to the Romans and the Apocalypse. Each was intended to meet some concrete situation, and always sprang out of some concrete historical circumstances. Each writer wished to bring the power of the Christian Gospel to bear upon some definite moral conditions. There is not a book in the New Testament which can be fully or properly

described either as a theoretical treatise, or an historical essay, or a mere literary effort.

#### DIFFERENT LEVELS OF THOUGHT AND LIFE

(c) Scientific modern study has also made it both necessary and possible to distinguish great differences in the character and the value of the contents of the different books of the New Testament. There are two significant illustrations of this fact. In the first place, there are present throughout the New Testament two elements which can be separated from each other. There are features which belong to the age in general, something which the New Testament has in common with the non-Christian—Jewish, Greek or Oriental—thought and life of the time. Then alongside of that element we have the message which is peculiar to these books themselves, or rather to the movement they represent, namely, that which is the peculiar contribution of the Founder, and of the teachers and preachers of the new religion. The proportion and the way in which these two elements are mixed in the different books vary considerably, but in none is either element entirely absent. Sometimes the peculiar Christian element is the predominant factor and the form only, or the expression only belongs to the age in general ; but sometimes the Jewish or Greek thought is only given a kind of Christian twist.

The relation between these two elements may be expressed in different ways. They have been called the kernel and the husk, the permanent and the passing, the spirit and the form, the Gospel and its historical expressions. A great deal of the teaching of the New Testament must always be concerned with distinguishing between these two.

In the second place, we have learnt to recognize many different levels of thought and life in the New Testament. Of these, three at least can be described with some fulness and represent fundamental types of early Christian thought and life, namely, the Synoptic, the Pauline and the Johannine. It will naturally be one of the main tasks of the Christian teacher to distinguish, compare and estimate

the value of these different forms of Christian life and thought.

#### THE PECULIAR CONTRIBUTION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

(d) By all these means what is the most original contribution made by the Christian movement to the life and thought of the world has been brought clearly into prominence. This peculiarly Christian contribution as revealed in the New Testament is found neither in the books themselves as books nor even in doctrines and ideas, but in the personalities whom they reveal—in the personal life and the practical attitude towards life and the world which they express, the deep moral and religious experience which created the books and the ideas. More especially, it has been shown that the comparative value of the books and their ideas depends upon the relation in which they stand to the one Personality which dominates them all to a greater or less extent—that of Jesus of Nazareth.

(e) Finally, it is important for the teacher to note that in establishing all these facts about the New Testament, modern study has also succeeded in revealing to us a great deal of the whole concrete world from and into which the Christian Religion and the New Testament itself came, the world in which the Christian Gospel had to dwell, with which it became united in detail and whose problems it set out to solve. They are the Jewish, the Oriental, the Greek and the Roman world of the time—in language, thought, morality, religion, politics and social conditions. Into this world, the Gospel, the Christian ideal and power were thrown 'like ferment into the pot.' The result is that what we have in the New Testament is the Gospel, not in the abstract or as a set of theoretical principles, but in a multitude of concrete forms and concrete relations. So far as the New Testament is concerned, the Gospel has no reality except as it takes shape in definite historical circumstances, men and societies.

#### SUMMARY

To put it briefly, then, the New Testament is a collection of and a selection from early Christian writings, differing

in nothing so far as all external characteristics are concerned from the other writings of the same age. Representing as they do a natural human growth, they are nevertheless the most characteristic literary products of the early Christian movement. Among themselves, the books differ in their literary form, purpose and value, but in them all we can distinguish the peculiar contribution of the new religion to the world—its Gospel, which is found pre-eminently in the personality of Jesus of Nazareth. The New Testament, however, gives us this Gospel in the mould of a definite age in many different forms to meet the various conditions of the time. For that reason, the study of the New Testament is being gradually transformed into a study of Primitive Christian Life, History and Personality, producing and expressing itself in thought, literature and action.

It is these general facts, with regard to the nature of the New Testament as a whole, that are by far the most important for the modern Christian teacher. The further results of critical study in detail, with regard to questions of date, authorship and the historical accuracy of the several books, are not so important, and any attempt to describe these results would take us at present too far afield. The essential point with regard to them all is that the decision of each question must be obtained in the same way as all other similar questions are decided, and that is simply on the evidence available.

It is seldom, however, that they are of any importance to the teacher as such. His great gain with regard to them is that he is placed in a much freer position on these matters. He reaches a point of view which makes him more or less independent of them, for he cannot any longer trade in the form of the books so much as in their content—not so much in the written word itself as in what is behind it—the experience, the life and the personalities revealed in and through the written word. It is only in so far as the critical discussions touch the life and personalities in the New Testament that they affect the teacher's work to any extent.

Such is the case, for instance, in the controversy with regard to the nature and historical character of the Fourth

Gospel. The different views on this question must lead to considerable differences in the treatment and use of the Fourth Gospel, and may change the whole historical picture of Jesus Christ. This, therefore, will need special discussion later on, along with some other questions of detail which affect the teaching of particular aspects of the New Testament.

## 2

### THE NEED OF TRAINED TEACHERS

It goes without saying that this general picture of the history and contents of the New Testament must condition the practical use made of its literature and history in all directions.

Any intrinsic authority which the New Testament may have on account of its contents is not thereby materially affected. Nor is our duty to make a knowledge of the New Testament an essential element in the general education of all who share in the civilization of Europe any the less imperative. For nothing can alter the fact that the New Testament has been one of the most potent factors in the growth of Europe.

### THE TRAINING OF TEACHERS

There are, however, some considerations arising from the circumstances of our time, the controversies which have till recently been raging with regard to questions of Biblical Criticism, the hold which more or less traditional views still have upon the older generation and the fragmentary way in which critical results have been spread by newspapers—all these considerations seem to demand a somewhat fuller discussion of the value and the practical effect of the modern study of the Bible upon moral and religious instruction. It ought not to be necessary to remind those who are responsible for the training of teachers that the first condition of any effective teaching of the Bible (in the schools of the State no less than in the schools of the Church) is some sound scientific knowledge

of the Bible itself in its history, form and contents. Yet the amazing fact is that at least half the children of the United Kingdom (and probably a much greater proportion) are constantly receiving moral and Biblical instruction from teachers who have had no scientific or any other definite training for their task. So far as the Elementary Schools are concerned, it is only in the denominational Training Colleges that any pretence is being made to prepare the teachers for the work of teaching the Bible, to which at least half an hour daily will be devoted throughout their career. Even *their* training is more often than not a very meagre and unscientific one. Most other Training Colleges seem quite content to live by the hope that the teachers they turn out will somehow 'muddle through' this part of their work in some miraculous way which they do not dream of trusting in the case of any other subject in the overcrowded time-table of Elementary Schools. The situation in the Secondary Schools is still more scandalous. On the other side, the Education Authorities with one accord take it for granted that their task is nobly done when they have issued confused injunctions that morality and the Bible must be taught in their schools, and have published a still more confused and unintelligent syllabus, according to which they are to be taught. They never dream of asking whether some knowledge of Ethics and the Bible are included by any happy chance in the long list of the qualifications of the teachers they appoint.

The so-called 'secular' authorities may, of course, legitimately retort that they are only following the example of the Church. This is unfortunately but too true, for Sunday-school teachers are even worse off in this respect than the teachers in State Schools. So far as Nonconformity at least is concerned, the one exception is the West Hill Training School, and that is more or less of a private venture, due to the enthusiasm of Mr. G. H. Archibald. Of course the result of all this insistence upon teaching morality and the Bible, coupled with the absolute neglect of providing any definite training for it, is that the teaching in the majority of cases is worse than useless, and that the most unintelligent views of the

Bible are still spread broadcast, and the most irreverent attitude towards the Bible is assiduously cultivated.

### THE CRITICAL STUDY OF THE BIBLE

So far we have been pleading only for some systematic knowledge of the Bible as the first condition of teaching it. We must realize, however, that in our day this systematic knowledge cannot be given or obtained except under the guidance of modern Biblical scholars who have made the Bible into a new book for the teacher as for all men. One of the most curious things in the history of most of the movements for the reform of the Sunday School is the hesitation and extreme diffidence with which this whole subject of the need for Biblical Criticism in the work of Biblical instruction is approached. An intense eagerness is often displayed for the adoption of up-to-date educational methods, but there is generally a good deal of circumlocution employed whenever it becomes a question of what, after all, we are supposed to teach through these modern methods. Many people seem to be under the impression that every child is born with certain traditional views of the Bible stereotyped upon his soul, and that therefore it is a very difficult and dangerous business to teach him what the Bible really means. As a matter of fact, of course, the truth is that in the majority of cases the parents and teachers have a perfectly free hand in this matter. If the child of twelve has acquired wrong views of the Bible, which must be corrected later on, it is generally because the home or the school has taken a good deal of trouble to drill those wrong views into him. With far less trouble he might have been helped from the start to grow unconsciously into the proper attitude towards the Scriptures. It is not a question of changing the views of the child but of changing the views of the teacher, and of so teaching the Bible from the start that the child may be saved from the wrench of having to remake his faith later on. We are now continually emphasizing the need of proper methods for doing this work, but we must not forget that the matter of our teaching is at least quite

as important a factor. How we teach will in the end depend upon what we want to teach.

That is why it is especially necessary at the present time to realize that modern educational methods will not and cannot become the permanent methods of moral and religious education unless and until they are used to teach the material best adapted to those methods. That material in this case is the Bible as it comes from the hands of the modern scientific scholars. It follows as an inevitable consequence for the teacher that he must learn to adopt the free attitude of the literary and historical student towards the material as well as the form of the Bible. He has done for ever with traditional theories both of the text, form and matter of the Biblical narratives. He will deal with them in exactly the same spirit and fashion as he must deal for educational purposes with all the world's best literature—and that is with intelligence, freedom and reverence.

### 3

## THE TEACHER'S ATTITUDE

If the case for the frank adoption of the modern literary and historical methods of studying the Bible seems to need strengthening, there is no lack of material for that purpose. Both on moral and educational grounds the demand is urgent and overwhelming.

### TWO QUESTIONS INVOLVED

Some of the hesitation with regard to this question may be due to a lack of clearness as to the issues involved.

In reality, two very different and independent problems have to be discussed. The first is—how far should our teaching of the Bible be based upon and be guided by the methods and results of modern criticism? In other words, what is its value for the practical teaching of the Bible? This deals with that part of the teacher's work which is, as it were, out of sight. It concerns the choice

and preparation of the lessons, the value of the Bible as interpreted by modern scholars and the positive picture to be given of its place. This touches the pupil only indirectly. He may be quite unconscious of what the teacher is doing for him.

The second question is one of a different kind. How far should the methods and results of modern criticism be deliberately and definitely taught in the school to the pupil? When and how should that be done? In other words, what is the educational value of a training in Biblical Criticism itself? Can it help, in any way, to promote the growth of Christian faith and character?

These two questions must be kept more or less apart and each discussed on its own merits. The latter we shall have to deal with later on among the particular problems of teaching the New Testament, and it is only the former which concerns us at present.

### THE MORAL DEMAND

In the first place, the use we make of the Bible should as an elementary moral duty be guided and controlled by what we know the Bible to be. If we know, as we do, that the Book of Deuteronomy was not written by Moses, but belongs to the seventh century before Christ, there can be no justification for refusing to base our lessons on what we know to be the truth. The situation here is now perfectly clear. In the theological lecture-room everywhere, the main results of modern Biblical Criticism as represented, say, by the late Professor Driver and Sir George Adam Smith in the Old Testament, and by the late Professor Sanday or by Harnack in the New Testament, are now universally adopted and more or less thoroughly applied. No responsible Biblical scholar would now dream of attributing the Book of Genesis to Moses or Isaiah xl. to lxvi. to the prophet of that name in the eighth century B.C., or the Gospel of Matthew to the Apostle, or 2 Peter to the Apostle Peter. He would not dream of trusting to the historical accuracy of Chronicles. He would not hesitate to cut up the Books of Samuel into earlier and later documents that sometimes contradict

each other, and he would immediately recognize in almost all the prophetic books the presence of passages from later writers. He takes it for granted that Matthew and Luke are dependent upon the Gospel of Mark and a Collection of the Sayings of Jesus, and he would not think of recognizing the Fourth Gospel without many qualifications as an historical record of the life of Jesus.

If we still go on teaching on the basis of the traditional views of the Bible, we are perpetuating what we know to be false views and destroying the truth of history.

#### NEED OF A CONSISTENT ATTITUDE

The situation is aggravated by the fact that for years the critical views have been filtering down through the newspapers in a fragmentary and negative way to the man in the street and the ordinary teacher, with the result that in the majority of cases those who are teaching the Bible in thousands of schools up and down the country have definitely ceased to believe in the traditional views and to adopt the traditional attitude towards the Bible, but have not yet attained any personal, positive and systematic conceptions in their place.

In many cases, therefore, an intolerable burden is imposed upon the truthfulness and sincerity of teachers whose instructions still imply the propagation of an attitude and of views which they no longer share.

We must not, of course, hide from ourselves the fact that when a modern view of the Bible is adopted as the only possible background for all our teaching, we are leaving behind us much more than particular views on particular points. It must be repeated that we are repudiating the whole idea of the Bible as an infallible supernatural, miraculous revelation of scientific, historical and religious truth, as well as the old conception of religious education and Biblical instruction as a whole. On the old view, our main business was to transmit as much of the material of the Bible as time allowed, taking it for granted that it was all of equal value. No other method was possible. Every lesson must consist of comment upon a particular passage. There was no room in the

scheme for lessons on either the History of Israel or the Religion of Israel as such, or upon the Books of the Bible as a whole. We could not give lessons on the character of Paul or the early History of Christianity except in a very fragmentary and haphazard way. According to the modern conception of the Bible and of Education, on the other hand, our business is to choose as much material from the Bible as has educative value and power, and to use it in such a way, at such a time and in such a form as will help to promote moral and religious growth.

### MODERN AND MEDIÆVAL METHODS

Between these two views there can be no real and permanent compromise, for what we have here is a quarrel between two fundamentally different conceptions of the meaning and place of the Bible as well as radically different conceptions of the meaning and methods of education. In religious instruction, it is true, many have for years been trying to combine modern educational ideas and methods with the traditional views of the Bible. The attempt is utterly hopeless, not only because the old views are false and discredited, but also because they are essentially inconsistent with every principle in modern education. The traditional views of the Bible imply and demand the mediæval methods in order to teach them. On the other hand, the principles and methods of modern education can only be used to teach the corresponding results of modern study. It was the old idea of the Bible that created the mediæval system of education, and they stand or fall together.

It must, therefore, be realized that what the public teacher and preacher are face to face with, is not a fragmentary and occasional acceptance under pressure of individual critical results—a mere grafting of some critical views upon an attitude which is not organically united with them. It may be inevitable for the man in the street to pick up the results of modern study in snatches, and adopt them one by one without revising his whole attitude towards the Bible, and without realizing how they work out as a whole. Such a haphazard pro-

ceeding can only be disastrous in its results for the Christian teacher. It is only a changed general attitude that can save the reality of Christian teaching.

Public teaching which implies the outlook of Sir George Adam Smith to-day, and that of Dean Burdon to-morrow, must have fatal results for both teacher and people. It is, moreover, not fair to judge the practical results of either the one or the other by the effect of what is only an undigested mixture of both. Yet such is the ambiguous situation in the Church, pulpit, Sunday and Day Schools of to-day. It is one of the practical tasks of modern religious education to see that the children of this generation grow naturally and from the outset into that consistent, reverent and enlightened attitude towards the Bible which corresponds to the facts with regard to its character and history as revealed by modern study. It is a task which can never be adequately accomplished without some clear realization of the essential change of attitude involved on the part of the teacher. For the purposes of modern systematic education and instruction, the Bible becomes more and more ineffective unless and until the teacher reads and studies it under the guidance of modern scholars. This, of course, does not deny the tremendously revolutionary influence of a free personal reading of the New Testament upon character. It only confirms it, for that personal reading, so far as it has been fruitful for Christian purposes, has always implied in practice the overthrow of the rigid traditional attitude and the adoption of the critical attitude in essence by always claiming the right consciously or unconsciously to choose some parts of the Bible for edification in comparative disregard of the rest. It has found by personal experiment and an instinctive religious valuation what, for purposes of systematic instruction, must be found by scientific methods. In reality, the traditional dogma of the Bible is only a belated or borrowed theory which attempts to justify the religious value of parts of the Bible as discovered by experience, and is extended by the logic of uniformity to other parts and to the Bible as a whole. It explains that experience in the wrong way by borrowing its categories from Jewish

and Pagan sources instead of building upon the Christian facts themselves.

#### ATTITUDE OF THE GREAT PREACHERS AND TEACHERS

It is worth noting also that this free critical attitude for which we are pleading has always supplied the central core of Christian teaching and preaching as that has been conceived by all the greatest Christian teachers and preachers in history. As Sir George Adam Smith has pointed out,<sup>1</sup> the modern critical movement leaves the very highest kind of preaching practically untouched. The great preachers have always instinctively used those parts of the Bible which modern criticism has now scientifically shown to be the most fundamental and the peculiar Christian element in the Bible. They have in practice instinctively adopted that attitude towards their material which we now find to be best fitted to bring us face to face with its peculiar value in history and for life. The best preaching has always been personal and has always insisted upon its right to choose its own material from the Bible in spite of all theory. It has gone straight as an arrow to the human experience, character and personalities of the Bible for its material and dealt with it in an essentially free, human way. That was the choice of its conscience, and the prevalent theory was only brought in alongside in order to enforce the choice. Nothing that the modern critic can say will compare in its daring directness with the judgment of Luther. "Christ is the master," he says, "and the Scriptures are the servant. Here is the touchstone for testing all books; we must see whether they work the works of Christ or not. The book which does not teach Christ is not apostolic even were St. Peter or St. Paul its writer." He speaks of "scrutinizing the Scriptures" and sometimes finding "wood, hay, stubble and not always gold, silver and diamonds. Nevertheless, the essential abides and the fire consumes the rest."<sup>2</sup> It is, of course, Luther, the prince of teachers and preachers,

<sup>1</sup> See *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament*, pp. 74-5.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Sabatier, *The Religions of Authority and the Religion of the Spirit*, pp. 158-9.

who here breaks through every dogmatic theory in order to find the real preaching and teaching material of the Bible. He thus expresses the essential practical attitude of all the very greatest preachers and teachers of Christian history, if not their theoretical belief. It is evident that no critical results can ever really touch any preaching or teaching that is based on such an attitude, although it may alter the forms of it in many ways.

All this, however, is only added testimony to the fact that the rich spiritual content in the Bible *will* make its power felt through and sometimes in spite of any and every theory with regard to it.

#### THE NEEDS OF THE ORDINARY TEACHER

The preaching and teaching genius of the first order, however, only comes now and then into human history, and his influence must in any case be mediated by a host of smaller men in every generation who must wearily plod their patient way to those heights which the prophets reach at a bound. For them one may venture once more to assert that the modern study of the New Testament as human historical documents of the prophetic and formative period of our religion is a necessary preliminary if they are to make effective use of its material for the purposes of systematic instruction. It is only from this point of view that the Bible can find and retain its place permanently in general modern education. That applies to every stage in religious instruction from the primary department upwards. To prevent misconception, however, it must be clearly borne in mind that this does not imply that critical considerations should be brought directly to the notice of children. It does not mean that the teacher is to talk to them about J, E, D and P, or about Ur-Marcus and the Logia, or Q, from which Matthew and Luke drew their material. As we shall see later on, it is only very, very rarely that it is possible or desirable to discuss questions of accuracy or authorship with children under twelve—probably never except in answer to direct inquiry. The teacher's lesson and actual teaching must naturally be positive. The point is that his positive presentation must

be based upon a critical consideration of his material before it can become an effective element in the education of present-day children. A brief review of the practice of any typically modern teacher like Mr. Archibald, or a brief consideration of some of the most familiar watchwords of modern educators, would make this at once evident. It would be seen that if modern educational methods are to find a home in Biblical instruction, the methods and main results of Biblical criticism must be adopted by the teacher as the basis of all his study and teaching—quite apart from the fact that it is only by their means that a true view of the Bible can be taught to the child.

### THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

It is really high time that this should be regarded as finally settled in Christian instruction. It is at the root of a great deal of the trouble which this time of transition has brought in religious instruction, while lack of clearness with regard to it accounts for a good deal of the futility of many earnest attempts at reform. We cannot indeed hope to make much progress in the effective teaching of the Christian Gospel and the New Testament to the modern world until the policy of the Christian teacher in this matter has been finally settled. Teaching an infallible oracle and an historical record of moral and religious experience are two very different and contradictory things, which require not only very different methods but also a very different type of material used for a very different purpose.

It is mere childishness to imagine that the reverence of men for the Bible and its moral and religious value for their lives can be diminished by telling 'the truth in love' about its origin, history and character, or that its dignity and spiritual power can ever be preserved and increased by insistence upon an antiquated and essentially pagan theory of its external authority as an infallible oracle on all kinds of subjects and a crudely supernatural prodigy. What the Bible is, it always has been and always will be, because men have heard the voice of God in and through it. The final test of our reverence for it and our belief in it will be in our utter trust in its inherent power

to reach the mind and heart and will—the conscience of youth. The best that our instruction can do is to give it as good a chance as we can to do its work. As Dr. Stanley Hall says : “ Youth most of all needs this greatest of human documents, and needs to read it with absolute freedom and honesty of mind ; and there is no danger but that the new light, already shining from it and yet to be revealed by their methods (those of the historical school of Bible study), will make the new to the old as astronomy to astrology, and will make young men not sceptics but apologists.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Adolescence*, vol. ii. p. 324.

## CHAPTER III

### THE PLACE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT IN EDUCATION

1. *The New Testament and Modern Values.*—The Educational Value of the New Testament—Education and the Preservation of Values—The Records, Creative Epochs and their Educational Significance.
2. *Educational Features of the New Testament.*—The Conflict of Ideals—The Literature of Personality—A System of Values—Social Significance.
3. *The New Testament and Adolescence.*—Grading the Material—Features of Adolescence—Adolescent Features in the New Testament—Adolescent Interest in the New Testament—The Natural Food of Youth.

#### I

### THE NEW TESTAMENT AND MODERN VALUES

HAVING before us such a New Testament as has been described in the previous chapter, we cannot but ask what special claim a collection and selection of documents of this kind can have upon the modern educator. What kind of educational authority can be associated with such a New Testament? What peculiar function can it perform in a system of education directed towards moral and religious ends? Is there anything in the nature and form of its contents to the call of which any definite stage of moral and religious growth will spontaneously respond? Is it capable of satisfying any fundamental educational need in a more effective way than any other material within our reach?

### THE EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Some intelligible answer must now be found to such questions as these, for henceforth the place of the Bible

in education must depend entirely upon the quality and power of its content and not upon any theory of its origin.

The writings of the New Testament are in the first place *historical* documents. They are records of the past. Is there any special reason why they should not be relegated to the Museum with a great many other relics of days gone by? What special justification is there for their continued life in the School?

It is possible and also quite legitimate to claim a special place for some kind of study of the New Testament by dilating upon the fact that the Bible is in any case an essential element in the civilization of Europe, and that therefore no one can be called properly educated who does not know the Bible. We might enlarge upon it as the great classic of English Literature. Such facts must certainly claim the attention of modern educators when they are discussing this subject, but they will not satisfy the claim usually made for the educational use of the New Testament. They provide, after all, only very subordinate arguments for that educational use, and do not, in fact, bring us face to face with the real and peculiar contribution of the New Testament. It is specifically a religious book, and all its other qualities have originally sprung from its characteristic spiritual message and power. If it is to find its own special niche in the educational building, it must in the end be because of the special help it can give in the *moral and religious* training of men and women. It sprang out of religious life and was written for religious purposes. Every other quality it possesses is only by the way, and every other influence it may have exerted is ultimately due to its spiritual character.

Now, we have already seen that modern educators are by this time practically agreed that religion, in spirit if not in form, is and must be a central constituent in the natural process of education. What, then, is the special contribution of the New Testament to religion, and to religion as an educational force? Naturally, it is the contribution which Christianity makes to religion in general. The New Testament is throughout the outcome of the Christian movement, and any contribution it can make to education must be a specifically Christian contribution.

It is not the whole of that Christian contribution. This would include the influence of the Christian Church, Christian personalities, Christian history and literature outside the New Testament, and especially all these Christian elements which are to-day still living and active all around us. But if the New Testament is not the whole of the Christian contribution to education, it may well represent the whole in essence, and it is undoubtedly the central element in the whole. It may not be the best means of bringing the influence of the Christian Church or Christian theology to bear upon the process of education, but it is at least still unique in the means which it places at our disposal to present the spiritual power behind the Christian Church and Christian theology effectively in its purest form. It is, on the face of it, our only record of the first creative period of the Christian Gospel when it came fresh and original into the world and was held passionately as the primary motive of life.

That is, in brief, the first step towards a general educational valuation of the New Testament, but its complete justification as an educational instrument of peculiar significance calls for a much fuller discussion than this implies.

#### EDUCATION AND THE PRESERVATION OF VALUES

Education, after all, like Religion itself, deals with the living issues of the growing soul in the present and in the future, and no mere past or its record can claim any right of entry into its schools except the right of effective service in dealing with those issues. Fundamental, natural education, as we have seen, consists of spontaneous growth through personal living experiences. All other systematic education and instruction—in School or Church or any other institution—are only attempts to make up for the inevitable lack of range, variety and intensity of these personal experiences by means of the organization of environment, guidance and other influences necessary to provide opportunity for the fullest growth of the human young. These attempts all spring from the recognition of the fact that there do exist in the life of

humanity certain 'goods' which are worth preserving, and which must be reproduced and increased from generation to generation for the sake of its continued life and growth. There is a growing tendency to find in this recognition of values—and especially the supreme values of goodness, truth and beauty—the deepest meaning and the strongest motive in man. The meaning of all education is to be found in the desire to secure, as the only guarantee of progress, that the young should appropriate these 'values' even though they cannot, owing to the naturally narrow range of their experiences, come into direct personal contact with their most powerful bearers, or cannot by their unaided immature judgment recognize the call of these 'values' amidst the chaos of conflicting sensations and presentations.

These values may range from the power to read, write or count, through the physical sciences, political and social institutions, family, State, Church, to purely moral and spiritual values like brotherhood, faith, hope, love, forgiveness, freedom, humanity and God. What is significant educationally about them is not only that they are the guarantees of present reality and future growth, and the strongest motives which lead to fuller life, but also that they all have their history and have grown out of history. To each belongs its creative epoch and period when it was first revealed, created and produced in and by some personality or group-movement of men. For lack of direct personal contact with these creative souls or movements, it is the historical record of them, where preserved, that provides the essential and most effective educational material for the reproduction and increase of the special values they created.

#### CREATIVE EPOCHS AND THEIR EDUCATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

That is the real justification of the use of the past for present and future education. It is the living past alone—the past which reveals most clearly and powerfully the living issues of the present—that can claim to provide material for 'educative' instruction, because it represents values for the present and the future.

This, therefore, is what justifies the prominent place given to Greek and Roman Literature and History in a modern system of education. Out of them have come in the main those values of truth, beauty and law without which no European civilization has existed or can ever exist.

It is also and equally the supreme justification for the use of the New Testament, and to a lesser degree of the Old Testament in modern education. The history we have in the New Testament is in a supreme degree the kind of history which must always claim the attention of the educator. It represents a movement of moral originality, of religious awakening, of enterprise and ideals. It is not primarily a history of organization and abstract theological doctrine, but of overflowing spiritual life—of religion as a driving impulse from above, as creative emotion, as living thought and expanding activity. There is no movement in history so intimately and essentially connected not only with the spread but also with the creation of so many of the central moral values which dominate the highest forms of thought, sentiment and activity of modern life. Apart from the specifically religious values themselves, the best elements in modern civilization are represented by the ethical interpretation of the universe, the spiritual interpretation of nature and history, the principle of ethical inwardness, the interpenetration of morality and religion, the modern emphasis on personality, the value of the individual, the organic conception of society, universal brotherhood, democracy, the supremacy of active love, moral freedom and a number of other similar ideas and ideals. These are one and all more or less intimately associated with the early history of the Christian Gospel, and more or less clearly represented in it.

It is probable that the prophetic movement in Israel, some aspects of Judaism, Roman Law, the Mystery-Cults of the East, Stoicism and other movements of the Hellenistic civilization, going back to Aristotle, Plato and Socrates, had a larger share than many Christian apologists realize in preparing the way for these ideals, and were significant factors in their origin.

All the same, there is no other record in history in which their essential nature and the co-ordination of so many of them are so effectively portrayed as in the significant parts of the New Testament. There is none in which their origin is recorded in a form so suitable for educational purposes or wherein such powerful help is offered and such impetus given for their reproduction in personal and social life. A brief reference to some of the main educational features of the New Testament will suffice to make clear its possibilities in this respect.

## 2

## EDUCATIONAL FEATURES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

### THE CONFLICT OF IDEALS

1. One of the elements in the literature of the New Testament which give its presentation of moral and spiritual values this extraordinary educational power is that it is no mere intellectual account of their origin and meaning, but is a living picture of their actual emergence and progress to supremacy in and through strenuous conflict between them and the traditional ideals which they replaced. In the New Testament we can actually see the new and the old locked in a life and death struggle. Moreover, it provides us not with one form only, but with varied expressions of this conflict.

It is a commonplace among educators that in comparison and contrast we have a factor of peculiar significance in the process of education. It means, therefore, a considerable addition to the educative power of the New Testament that in it we see the new moral and spiritual values emerging in conflict with the old ideals already in possession of the field, and that in the records of Jesus, Paul and John especially we have that conflict in several different forms.

## THE LITERATURE OF PERSONALITY

2. A still greater significance is given to the New Testament as educative material by the fact that it brings before us these spiritual values incorporated in personalities of great power, sanity and clarity. Practically all its material is the direct expression of personality and is gathered round a series of great personalities. It is first and foremost a literature of personal power. It is the fact that the writers have succeeded in bringing before us so vividly the figures of Peter, Paul, John (whether Apostle or not) and most of all Jesus—it is this which gives the New Testament its most prominent peculiarity. Even those parts which seem at first sight to fall into the region of history—in the sense of events—and even the teaching, doctrinal discussions and questions of organization are best appreciated, best understood and best used in direct connection with this personal element. This is especially true of the Letters of Paul. For educational purposes, their greatest value lies not in what they say about theological doctrines or the organization of the Church, but in the light they cast upon the life, work and personal religion of the Apostle himself.

“By what quality,” asks Dr. Felix Adler, “in themselves or fortunate constellation of circumstances did Homer and the Biblical writers succeed . . . in creating types of the utmost universality and yet imparting to them the breath of life, the gait and accent of distinctive individuality? I imagine that they succeeded because they lived at a time when life was much less complex than it is at present, when the conversation, the manners, the thoughts, the motives of men were simple. They were enabled to individualize the universal because the most universal, the simplest motives, still formed the main-spring in the conduct of individuals. It was not necessary for them to enter into the barren region of abstraction and generalization to discover the universal. They pictured what they actually saw.”<sup>1</sup>

Such a general explanation may be adequate for the Old Testament, but the age of the New Testament was in

<sup>1</sup> *The Moral Instruction of Children*, pp. 108-9.

its way as complex an age as our own, and the tendency towards abstractions was perhaps even greater. It would be truer to say that in contrast with their age in general, the men and writers of the New Testament lived so entirely in the region of the great moral and spiritual simplicities that the concrete personal picture of them naturally and inevitably attains universality.

In any case, the fact is that the New Testament writers have actually succeeded in depicting great personalities of distinctive individuality who are at the same time types of the utmost universality. Teaching the New Testament essentially means making these men live again in the mind and heart and conscience of our scholars. Whatever else we do or leave undone, this must remain our central task, and the tragedy of our present-day teaching is that our whole curriculum is framed in such a way as to prevent this being done in any effective way. We are bringing men into contact with the written word rather than the living souls behind it. We are teaching books instead of men, and we leave them with abstract and dead ideas instead of concrete, personal inspiration. All the energy of our educational passion should be thrown into the task of presenting the life, work and personality of Paul, and still more of Jesus, in such a way as to do their work once more upon the minds and hearts and the souls of the youth ; and for the sake of our Gospel, we should be willing to sacrifice everything else in order to do that.

This realization of the supreme spiritual values in personal, individual forms—especially in Jesus Christ, whose character runs on such extraordinarily clear, simple and pure lines—means a great addition to educational efficiency as compared with the presentation of the ideal in and for itself. “Logical or mathematical truth,” says Dr. Barbour, “attains universality by a sacrifice of the concrete ; while moral truth gains universal assent—the assent of will above all—only in so far as it appeals to the imagination and rouses the slumbering ideals in the hearts of all. Further, since it is directed to action, it is most cogent when it appears not as a formula, which still needs translation into terms of practice, but as a

living example, showing what goodness is in reality and deed."<sup>1</sup>

### A UNIFIED SYSTEM OF VALUES

3. The result of this incorporation of spiritual values in personalities like Paul and Jesus is that what we get in the New Testament, and especially in Christ, is not merely a number of separate disconnected ideals or a series of independent moral and religious values side by side, but a whole *unified system* of values. What marks Him is what has been called a 'transvaluation of all values.' What is revealed in Him is a whole new spiritual life and world—a new orientation of all values which is for Him and becomes for His disciples through Him—the ultimate, the divine life—that 'new man' and 'newness of life' of which Paul speaks. There is no need to labour the point that without this element of unity and consistency there can be no thorough appreciation and assimilation of the separate and independent values of life one by one. "Judgments of value," says Professor Seth Pringle-Pattison, ". . . are not to be taken . . . as so many detached and mutually independent pronouncements of one faculty or another upon particular features or aspects of the world. They represent rather so many parts of one fundamental judgment in which the nature of reality, as exhibited in the system, may be said to affirm itself. Every particular judgment depends for its ultimate sanction on the recognition of its object as a contributory element to this inclusive whole."<sup>2</sup>

### THE SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF EARLY CHRISTIAN PERSONALITIES

4. One other element at least deserves to be mentioned in any attempt at some general appreciation of the educational value of the New Testament. Its great personalities as the revealers and bearers of a new spiritual life and world do not appear merely as isolated individuals fighting simply for their own spiritual emancipation, but

<sup>1</sup> *A Philosophical Study of Christian Ethics*, p. 299.

<sup>2</sup> *The Idea of God*, p. 223.

as, in their different ways, leaders of group-movements. Their appearance and activities have an essentially social significance. This is the case not only with regard to Jesus and Paul in their different ways. All the other representative figures also—Peter, Luke and Mark, as well as John and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews—are not only typical figures in themselves, but even in their writings they probably have behind them social groups and circles with fairly well-defined types of thought and Christian attitude which they represent.

This also implies a definite addition to the educative value and power of the history and literature of the New Testament.

It is very probable that further consideration of the material of the New Testament, from this point of view, will bring to light other elements which will help to substantiate its claim to be and to remain the most significant material in any intelligent and thorough system of modern education and instruction.

If it is the aim of education to preserve and increase the values which give meaning and power to modern life as a whole, then undoubtedly all serious educators must look upon the New Testament as a most significant element in the material at their disposal. There is no other extant literature, neither Jewish, Greek nor Latin, which brings together within so manageable a compass such a vivid record and living picture of the origin and spread of those intrinsic values and moral ideals which alone make modern life worth living. If there are other records which perform the same or a similar service for *some* of these ideals, there is no other which puts their creative material into such sharp contrast with the old, shows them going forth conquering and to conquer with such power, incorporates them in such personal, individual and yet universal forms, reveals them so much as a unified system and gives them such social significance. That means to say, there is no other which presents the material in so essential and so natural an educative form as the New Testament.

All these qualities in the New Testament, quite apart from its subsequent history, its general contribution to

the civilization of Europe and its educational traditions, provide adequate justification for its very large use in education, and that because of the very nature and form of its contents.

They will also help to make clear the proper and peculiar place of the New Testament in the process of education, and the definite stage at which its use will become most effective.

### 3

## THE NEW TESTAMENT AND ADOLESCENCE

Having thus marked out the general function of the New Testament in Education and enumerated some of the qualities which make it supremely capable of performing that function, we now proceed to ask where it fits most naturally into the process of Christian education ? Is there any point at which we must almost inevitably turn to the New Testament for our material ? Is it particularly adapted for infancy or youth or maturity ? Or can it be used indiscriminately at all ages ? Is there any particular stage at which we can with any confidence say : It is just here that the peculiar contribution of the New Testament comes naturally to its own in moral and religious instruction and education ?

### GRADING THE MATERIAL

There is no need to emphasize the fact that we have here one of our fundamental educational problems, the answer to which ought practically to decide the whole framework of our moral and religious curriculum. The traditional practice was to drop a New Testament passage down anywhere, and, as in the case of the old International Lessons, this practice was based upon the supposition that every part of the Bible provides suitable material for all ages. The modern study of educational Psychology, however, has by this time driven that theory out of the field, but not always with the result of dismissing the practice that corresponds to it. We all recognize that

the moral and religious growth of the individual is divided into the periods of Infancy, Childhood and Adolescence before maturity—each with its own peculiar characteristics, needs, interests and capacities. We are not, however, so ready to apply that principle in any thorough way to the disposition of the Biblical material.

So far as the New Testament is concerned, there can be no question as to the period to which its material as a whole belongs. In its present form it is the natural food of Adolescence. That period provides the one great opportunity of the Christian Gospel and the New Testament. It is only then that we can speak in any full sense of teaching the New Testament. We may even go so far as to say that it is then or not at all, so far as all human educational means are of any importance. Before that time, we can only prepare the way for the great lesson. Our educational opportunity is, to all intents and purposes, lost, unless the Christian motive, the Christian ideal and power have found a home in heart and mind and will before maturity is reached. All the evidence of Psychology and experience, of history and New Testament study, points directly to the fact that the Christian Gospel is the Gospel of Youth, that the New Testament, both in the character and form of its content, is especially adapted for the needs of youth, and that youth in its need and capacity cries out for both. For the full psychological, historical and educational evidence for these statements the reader must be referred to the one great study of Adolescence by Dr. Stanley Hall.

#### FEATURES OF ADOLESCENCE

For every individual the years between thirteen and twenty-four are the most fateful years of life—the years that make or mar almost without exception. With the gradual passing of childhood begins the great flowering time of the human spirit in Adolescence and Youth. "This is the golden period of life, when all that is greatest and best in heart and will are at their strongest. If the race ever advances to higher levels, it must be by increments at this stage, for all that follows it is marked

by decline."<sup>1</sup> "True religion culminates in Youth, and doctrine is its substitute and memorial in maturity and old age. Youth has far more to teach in this field, if it only knew how, than it can learn from age."<sup>2</sup> The glory of its triumphs no tongue can tell, while its tragedies are too deep for tears. Abundant, overflowing life comes pouring into mind and heart and will—into body and soul; and life goes pouring out again prodigally and recklessly in tumbling waves of contradictory activities. The child leaves the quiet haven to embark upon a sea of troubles—significant enough even when most imaginary—its tiny bark at the mercy of every wind that blows and every wave that breaks. It is an exploring, expanding, adventurous time, a time of hopeless fears, of fearless and fearful hopes, a time of boundless faiths and of dark despair, of love that mars and of love that makes. It scales the heights of heaven and there meets God, or it may descend and be singed with the fires of hell. The only thing it may not do is to jog contentedly along the conventional paths of earth.

Only a confusion of metaphors can attempt to describe this period, for it is not a world but a chaos—a chaos waiting for the Spirit to move upon the face of the waters and for the divine word: "Let there be light." If the light does come it will come with creative power which will probably mark out for ever the boundaries of earth and sky, of land and sea, and in the end make man out of the dust of the earth.

But if Youth does come to the light, it must come in its own free way. It snaps at external control, and no Creed or Dogma can hold it. Its teacher must be its comrade and its lover first of all—ready to start at any moment on any great adventure or any forlorn hope. Yet no age will bend so utterly before its chosen gods. Indeed, the first and greatest task of the educator is to reveal to Youth the gods to choose from, give him as many strong examples as he can gather of the better choice—the teacher's own among the rest—and then murmur reverently, "If Youth but knew"—the God to choose.

<sup>1</sup> Stanley Hall, *Educational Problems*, vol. i. p. 163.

<sup>2</sup> Stanley Hall, *Adolescence*, vol. ii. p. 317.

It shames us to think how mean and puny, how haphazard and helpless, is the service we render Youth. We are fathers who give him stones when he begs for bread. We are teachers who shake the mailed fist in his face when he leaps to the intimate clasp of the naked hand. We shock his modesty and drag his secret shames to the light of day. We laugh at his seriousness and sneer at his dreams. We stamp upon his tragic doubts, we chill his enthusiasm and but too often leave him to sink or swim in the storm and stress of the spirit. If he but seldom drowns, that is more often due to his natural buoyancy than to our care. We do our best to keep him unregenerate, and he converts himself in spite of us, and worships as his chosen gods the dreams and ideals which we have cast away before middle age as far "too rich and good for human nature's daily food."

You ask what can our ordinary, mechanical Biblical Instruction do for such a being as this? Nothing—but harm. What can even the best instruction do? Little enough, perhaps, but yet that little may be enough to make all the difference. Youth needs ideas, and ideas, and still more ideas, all the living ideas and the significant facts, incarnate in the dominating personalities and movements of history—the great spiritual permanent values in myriad forms of truth, beauty and goodness. He needs to rediscover them for himself and to reproduce them with those who first saw the face divine, so that he may conserve and increase them for the world to come. That is the demand of the universe upon him, for the measure of its progress is the measure of Youth's response to that call. Youth is life and makes life. There never is anything else in the world, and no one else but those who stand and wait to do his bidding.

#### ADOLESCENT FEATURES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

There is no record that answers so readily and so fully to the call of Youth, nor one that by obedience to his call is capable of ruling him so completely, as the New Testament and what it represents. Dr. Stanley Hall returns again and again to underline the fact that

the New Testament needs Youth, that Youth needs the New Testament, and that in its story is eternal youth.

"At the top of the curve of life comes Christianity, for ever supreme because it is the norm for the apical stage of human development, glorifying adolescence and glorified by it, and calculated to retain and conserve youth before the decline of the highest powers of the soul in maturity and age."<sup>1</sup>

"The story of Jesus's life, psychologically treated, whatever else it may be, is also another abridged and variant edition of the same import (namely, of adolescent experience). There is the glimpse of an early life of natural growth in favour of God and man. At the age of early Oriental puberty he is already characteristically pondering the highest themes with deepening sense of wrong and human need, a glimmering, conscious higher mission struggling with temporal ambition, a long conflict of the noblest adolescent idealism that ever was with the hard, inveterate conservatism of a decadent age and senescent man, with bigotry, hypocrisy and shame, ending in defeat, the self-effacement of a shameful death ; then the inevitable *resurgam* motive, at first incredulous and apparitional, with ascension or sublimation as the climax, but which later became the very substance of the Christian faith and the corner-stone of belief in Jesus's deity and our regeneration."<sup>2</sup>

"Thus the story of the Cross, which is the chief symbol of Christianity, known by multitudes who know nothing else of Jesus, when relived and vitally participated in, is the best of all initiatives to maturity." . . .

"The Gospel story is the most adequate, classic and dramatic representation of the truest formulae of the most critical revolution of life, to successfully accomplish which is to make catharsis of our lower nature and to attain full ethical maturity without arrest or perversion : this is the very meaning of adolescence. As Jesus, the totemic embodiment of the race, gathered, unified and epitomized in His own life the many elements of autosoteric motive that were before scattered and relatively ineffective, and made thereby a new focus of history to which so

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, ii. 361.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, ii. 333-4.

many lines before converged, from which they have since diverged ; so each youth can now, thanks to Him, condense in his own life the essential experience of the race by sympathetic participation in this great psychopheme.”<sup>1</sup>

“ Adolescence is the time when Jesus’s character, example and teaching is most needed. He was Himself essentially an adolescent. . . . Jesus came to and for adolescents, in a very special and very peculiar and till lately not understood sense, and just as it is pedagogically wrong to force Him upon childhood, it is wrong not to teach Him to adolescents. Their need is so great as to constitute a mission motive of even more warmth and force than those that now prevail. No matter for what creed, race or civilization, and no matter what we think about His deity or even the veracity of the record, I am convinced that there is no career or character in history or literature which so fully meets the deepest needs, supplements the weaknesses and defects, and strengthens all the good impulses of this period as His.”<sup>2</sup>

It has been added that the first disciples were also in the adolescent stage of life, and so was Paul, when they were all swept into the Christian movement. The whole period covered by the main record of the New Testament may indeed easily be written in terms of adolescent experience—with its expanding thought, life and activity, with its enthusiasms and passion and ferment, with its exuberant ecstasies and visions and its apocalyptic dreams, with its freedom and its daring and its impatience of all authority and organization. The whole picture is one of the overflowing freshness of youth—youth, of course, in spirit and not in the flesh. We lose count of the age in years of men like Paul, for we see the Gospel of the New Testament creating and re-creating the spirit of youth within them, prolonging adolescence to middle age and making even the old men dream dreams.

#### ADOLESCENT INTEREST IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Actual experience and experiment also go to show that the New Testament is thus the natural food for adolescence.

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, ii. 337.

<sup>2</sup> Stanley Hall, *Educational Problems*, vol. i. 163.

"It seems to be a fact," says Professor G. A. Coe, "that interest in the New Testament, especially the Gospels and the Acts, becomes acute not far from the end of early adolescence. This is the time when we should expect the inner life of Christ and the Apostles to become interesting."<sup>1</sup> Mr. G. E. Dawson investigated the subject of "Children's Interest in the Bible" between the ages of eight and twenty, and found that between eight and thirteen the predominant interest was in the Old Testament. After that, this interest steadily decreases, while that in the New increases, until at twenty the Old can only claim the preference of 10 per cent. of the boys, while the New Testament claims the interest of 90 per cent. Again, the interest in the life and person of Jesus is very little at the early ages of eight, nine, ten and eleven, but it steadily grows as the years go by until it reaches its height between fifteen and twenty.<sup>2</sup>

This correspondence between the New Testament and Adolescence is confirmed by every feature of these writings which was mentioned in the previous section. We saw that it is the literature of the creative epoch of the great ideals, that it shows them in conflict with the old, that it gives them in personal forms, that it therefore reveals them not as separate fragments, but as a unified system of values, and gives them, moreover, a social significance.

In fact, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that the New Testament belongs peculiarly to youth, and youth belongs to it by native right. It is his book and his world. It came forth out of his mouth, and it shall not return unto him void, but it shall accomplish that which he pleases and it shall prosper in the thing whereto he sent it. Its voice ought to ring in the ears of the waiting youth of every generation, saying in the accents of God : "Ye shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace : to the mountains and to the hills breaking out before you into singing : and to all the trees of the field clapping their hands."

<sup>1</sup> *Education in Religion and Morals*, p. 294 n.

<sup>2</sup> *Ped. Sem.*, vol. vii. p. 151.

## THE NEW TESTAMENT THE NATURAL FOOD OF YOUTH

The New Testament belongs to youth by right divine, and youth belongs to it by human need—the New Testament, of course, not merely as the mechanical record and written word, the text of conventional commentary and the pretended source of rigid creed, but the New Testament as the clear mirror of youth's reckless adventure into the realm of moral revolution, of Jesus and Paul and Peter and John who came to turn the world upside down. This New Testament is youth's natural food and drink, the air he must breathe and the sun that shines upon him, just as Jesus is his natural Saviour and Lord by the authority of His illimitable faith and love. It is the Temple of the Holy Spirit of Youth, though we have often made it into a den of thieves.

All this does not mean that no part of the material of the New Testament can be effectively adapted for use at any other time than adolescence, but only that it cannot be used with the full purpose and import of the original writers ; and that only subordinate fragments are in their present form appropriate at any earlier stage. For instance, we can and ought to tell some of the stories of the New Testament, and especially the life of Jesus in some form, during the years of childhood. What, however, we must recognize is that we cannot then give its full Christian meaning to that life. We can only deal with some aspects of it which are in line with the interests, the needs and the experience of the child. He may thus be prepared for the fuller lesson later on, but the material must be shorn of some of its meaning in order to do so.

The real educational inference is that the whole weight of teaching the New Testament in any full sense should fall in the adolescent period, and that the whole curriculum should be framed with that end in view. The character and form of its contents is specially adapted for that purpose, while the natural interests of adolescence make the work easier and more effective than at any other time. When we try to do the same work at any other period, we are very largely wasting our time and only making the task more difficult at the proper time.

The great problem, therefore, of the instruction of youth in the New Testament is the problem of letting him come to his own—to enter upon his natural heritage. It is the problem of helping him to rediscover and to reproduce with Jesus, and by His power, the supreme spiritual values which Jesus discovered and produced, and which youth alone can conserve and increase from generation to generation.

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## CHAPTER IV

### THE EDUCATIONAL INTERPRETATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. *The Practical Character of the New Testament.*—The Different Aspects of the New Testament—Literature—History—Religion—The Missionary Character of the New Testament—Need of an Educational Interpretation—Some Misconceptions of its Meaning.
2. *The Educational Study of the New Testament.*—The Different Types of Material—The Essential Elements of the Educational Process—Ideals and their Realization.
3. *Illustrations and Examples.*—Educational Study of the Second Coming—The Parousia in the New Testament—Its Place and Value in the New Testament—Application to Types of Thought and to Personalities.
4. *Results of the Study.*—The Rich Variety of the New Testament—The Gift and the Demand—The Educational Value of this Variety—The Need for Unity and Application.

#### I

### THE PRACTICAL CHARACTER OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

THE preceding discussion has revealed the fact that the New Testament as a whole provides material of supreme value for all education directed towards moral and spiritual ends. It has also shown that the teacher of youth in particular is called imperatively to its study.

#### VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Many other types of students, it is true, have legitimate interests in the New Testament, and in varying degrees can claim it as part of their peculiar heritage and material.

The New Testament belongs to the great literature of the world. In its own Hellenistic period and its own Hellenistic tongue it towers far above all the literary records of the time in originality, power and beauty, while in many of its translations also it has attained the formative place in the development of literary style. It is no wonder, therefore, that the student of literature as such rejoices in it and claims it as his own.

The New Testament is also the record of the origin of a great historical movement, destined to become in some form or other one of the decisive factors in the development of the civilization of Europe. Its material, therefore, naturally belongs to the general historian.

It is, moreover, the history in particular of the genesis and spread of a religion—and that the most significant religion in the history of the world. It is therefore legitimately claimed as his own by the student of religion and the religions, and, of course, still more peculiarly it belongs to the historian of Christianity. Among the many workers in this field the Christian theologian, both as the historian and the philosopher of Christian Doctrine, has insistently and until recently with success claimed the New Testament as his own peculiar source and material.

#### THE MISSIONARY CHARACTER OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Within definite limits all these claims can, of course, be amply justified. There *is* great literature, great history and in particular a great religious and theological history in these writings. Yet it is neither the literary man, nor the historian, nor the theologian who has the first and supreme claim upon the New Testament, but the practical teacher of the Christian Gospel—whether as missionary or preacher or catechist or Christian teacher in the narrower sense. Every book in the New Testament sets itself deliberately in some form or other to spread the Christian life, to confirm Christian faith, to create and deepen a Christian impression, to inspire Christian hopes, to clarify Christian ideas, to strengthen the Christian will

—all of them different ways of teaching Christianity and different aspects of the Christian teacher's task. The definite aim of each writer is to create and train Christian disciples. Everything else is subordinate to that end. The writers use almost every kind of appeal for that purpose—now a burst of eloquent prose, and again an historical account, now an appeal to personal religious experience, and again a theological argument. The New Testament is throughout an 'edifying' book in the true sense of that much-abused word ; it is intended to build up, to construct Christian disciples and discipleship. Face to face with some actual concrete situation in actual life, there is everywhere an attempt to make some aspect of the Christian Gospel effective in it.

It is, therefore, the man who, in whatever form, is trying to do the same work to-day—it is he who is putting the material of the New Testament to its original and proper use. The teacher's study of it for the practical purposes of his task will naturally do fuller justice to its peculiar nature than that of either the mere historian or the scientific theologian. These books belong to the historian and to the theologian only in a secondary sense—preparatory to its use for practical Christian purposes by the preacher and the teacher. It does not appear that any writer of the New Testament ever set out with the intention of constructing a system of theology or even of formulating a theological doctrine.

There are theological ideas certainly in the New Testament and fragments of many theological systems, but they are always introduced and employed for growing and enriching Christian faith and life. They are never, and probably can never be, brought into any complete theological unity or consistency. In the proper sense there is no such thing as a New Testament Theology, and even the task of constructing a Pauline Theology is very largely a matter of guesswork and of doubtful inferences from scattered and incidental references in a few of Paul's letters. We are always doing at least some injustice to the apostle and missionary when we use his incidental sayings for purposes they were never meant to serve. The writers of the New Testament can only have full

justice done to them in the world and work of preachers and teachers of Christ and His Gospel.

#### THE NEED OF AN EDUCATIONAL INTERPRETATION

How far the individual writings themselves achieved each its particular purpose of educating its first readers, of influencing them in the direction of the Christian Gospel, we do not and cannot now know in detail. That these writings have proved effective, and probably the most effective instrument to bring men to Christ many times since then, the history of almost every religious revival abundantly proves, while every man who reads them humbly, attentively and intelligently knows also their revolutionary power.

The men who stand behind the New Testament writings certainly achieved a miraculous triumph in their practical task of moving the men and the world of their time effectively in a Christian direction by their living and preaching and teaching of the Christian Gospel. The rapid spread of Christianity throughout the Roman world from its obscure beginning in a far-away provincial village is not only a testimony to its own essential truth and power, but also to the effectiveness of the teaching and preaching by means of which the work was done. One of the chief meanings of the New Testament is that it gives us the only record of what must have been the most successful, practical and educational propaganda in history, and the only picture we have of the aims and methods of the missionaries, and of the ways and means they used. It gives us the Gospel as preached and taught—in forms showing the wealth and variety of the interests and motives to which the teachers appealed.

Whatever else the New Testament is, therefore, it is a supreme object-lesson for the work of the Christian teacher and preacher in every age. The men who still want to use it, to make Christians by teaching and preaching, by proclamation of the Gospel or by instruction, are the men who are putting the material of the New Testament to its own proper and peculiar use—the original use for

which at least the greatest part of it was created and written.

Even if these records were only great literature and history, a study of them for definitely educational purposes would certainly be fully justified, for it is in great literature and history that the educator must always find his educative material. They call for and demand such a study imperatively, because they owe their origin mainly to the needs of Christian instruction and education and will not reveal their full power under any other treatment.

### MISCONCEPTIONS OF ITS MEANING

In thus calling for a definitely practical and educational interpretation and study of the New Testament, it may be well at the outset to guard against some possibility of misconception. The kind of study we have in mind is no substitute for a thoroughly scientific treatment. Neither is it something tacked on artificially to a literary and historical study of these writings. This practical study is itself part of our scientific study of the New Testament, essential to it, built upon a literary and historical study and helpless without it. Ultimately, indeed, it is in such an educational interpretation that we find the climax of the scientific method of approaching and dealing with the material of the New Testament and of revealing its full meaning and power.

To such an educational interpretation there will be two aspects—one descriptive and the other appreciative. The descriptive study will attempt to interpret the New Testament historically as the material actually used by the first teachers and preachers and missionaries of the Christian Gospel in their varied efforts to make Christians out of the people of their time. The second or appreciative study will consider whether, how far and in what way the Christian teacher to-day can use the same material for the purpose of making Christian disciples in the twentieth century. It deals, that is to say, with the modern use to be made of the material gathered and arranged in the first part. It will be well to keep these

two aspects of the educational study of the New Testament separate from each other.

## THE EDUCATIONAL STUDY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Even a rapid survey of the various parts of the New Testament with the Herbartian 'formal steps' in mind, will reveal at once how naturally its material falls into psychological and educational categories. And a merely formal educational arrangement of the New Testament thus suggested will not be without its value for the practical work of teaching. It will not, however, carry us very far, and in order to bring out the full significance of the material before us we shall need a more radical regrouping.

We must think rather of the different types of educational forces at our disposal in the New Testament, namely, its historical incidents, its ideas, its distinctive types of thought and its personalities. It is the business of the teacher to use each and all of these to set up an effective educational process in the mind and life of his pupils.

Now the essential elements which make up the general apparatus of education may be reduced to three, and every educational process implies a constant interaction between them.

In the first place, every new educational activity starts from some actual situation in life as it is.

Secondly, it is the intention of every educational process to change that situation into some corresponding ideal.

Thirdly, the educator brings, according to his opportunities, some definite influences, powers and motives to bear upon the actual situation in order to produce the ideal he has in mind.

### THE MAIN ELEMENTS IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

That means to say that the teacher, in the general educative process as a whole and in each particular part

of it, must have before him some actual human situation which he desires to change in the direction of some ideal in which he believes, by means of some influences which he can organize and use for that purpose.

It is evident, therefore, that in order to make a full educational study of the New Testament, we must proceed to analyse every incident, every idea, every type of thought, every personality and every book in the New Testament in such a way as to make plain to ourselves the nature of the human situation, the moral and spiritual ideal and the kind of motive-power that are involved in it.

Naturally, with regard to a great many of the details of the New Testament, no very clear or satisfactory results can be expected from such an analysis. Their independent value is but slight, and it is only indirectly as part of a larger whole that they acquire any educational significance. Even that, however, it is well for the teacher to realize. It will help him to avoid the degrading 'homiletic' method of trying to squeeze a sermon or a lesson by ingenuity out of unimportant sayings or passages where neither sermon nor lesson is naturally to be found.

### IDEALS AND THEIR REALIZATION

Such questions, however, become more and more applicable and appropriate with every step as we ascend from the particular incidents and ideas to the personalities revealed in the New Testament. When we reach such personalities as Paul or Jesus, these questions lead us to the innermost secrets of the New Testament, and they become the only questions which are capable of bringing us face to face with its heart and soul. What did these men really want to do? What was the actual situation faced by them? What kind of ideal did they hold before men? By what means do they attempt to move men in its direction? How exactly do they try to help men? To what motives do they appeal?

These are, after all, the vital questions with regard to any personality and especially the great dominating personalities of history.

It is something of this kind that is meant when we

speak of the educational study of the New Testament, and it will be seen that we are dealing almost entirely not with the external form or origin of the writings, but with their historical and intellectual content. This is not an arbitrary handling of the New Testament such as the old 'homiletic' method very largely involved, nor is it independent of the scientific, historical and literary method of interpretation. It is definitely built upon the work of the historian and literary critic, and takes their results for granted. All questions of text, authorship, date, authenticity, historical value, literary form and even questions of exegesis in detail are already considered and judged before such a study can fruitfully begin. It is, moreover, itself in the first place a purely scientific historical study—being only an attempt to describe the actual facts with regard to the New Testament and its writers. The use that may afterwards be made of the results of such a study by the modern Christian teacher and their value for his task to-day is a different matter altogether, which ought to be sharply distinguished from the historical study itself. *We* must shoulder the responsibility for the use we make of the material it provides, and must justify that use to ourselves and others at every step.

## 3

## ILLUSTRATIONS AND EXAMPLES

Let us see, then, exactly what is involved in a study of the material of the New Testament from this point of view, and what kind of results we may expect from it. Here, of course, we can only take one or two examples from the very varied and rich contents of the New Testament.

## EDUCATIONAL STUDY OF THE PAROUSIA

One of the most prominent ideas in almost every part of the New Testament is that of the *Parousia*, or what is usually called the Second Coming of Christ. On the basis

of all that modern literary and historical criticism has told us about the history and different forms taken by this idea in the New Testament, what we particularly wish to know with regard to it is its educational value for the life, practical work and teaching of the first Christian teachers and preachers of the Christian Gospel. We are not at present concerned with its place and value in any modern Christian instruction.

To get what we want, we have to address our three series of questions to this idea or belief :

1. What kind of ideal of life—personal or social, moral or religious—does this belief imply, embody or encourage ?

How is it related to other aspects of the Christian hope and of the Christian ideal found in the New Testament, as, for example, the Last Judgment, the Resurrection, the Kingdom of God, etc. ?

Does this belief stand at the centre of the New Testament conception of the ideal, or only on its circumference ?

Has it grown naturally out of the life of the Christian Gospel, or is it only a foreign element brought into Christian thought and life from elsewhere ?

Having asked these and similar questions with regard to the type and ideal of life implied and encouraged by this belief in the Second Coming, we come next to a series of questions concerning the way in which the idea is used in the New Testament :

2. Upon what kind of situation and circumstances is it brought to bear in the different writings of the New Testament ?

For what special purpose do the different writers use it ?

3. What is the nature and value of the appeal it makes ?

How far is that appeal consistent with the central motives of the Christian Gospel ?

What moral interests is it used to protect ?

What kind of help does it give to a man like Paul to realize the Christian faith and life ?

In what special ways does he and the other writers of the New Testament use the belief in order to help their readers ?

Is it used mainly as an inspiration to renewed moral

activity, or as a protection against forces hostile to faith, or as a comfort amidst evil circumstances ?

Even to suggest the answer to such questions would lead us far beyond our limits. It would lead to a discussion of the conception of Messiahship entertained by Jesus, of the place and value of the Eschatology of the Gospels, of the meaning and use of the title ' Son of Man,' of the different main forms taken by the idea of the Second Coming in the Primitive Church, in Paul and in John, of the way in which the early Christians generally threw most of their faith and hope into this particular form, and a multitude of other questions.

### THE PAROUSIA IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The belief does not stand by itself in the New Testament, but is intimately connected with and a central element in the whole 'other-worldly,' eschatological conception of life which dominates so much of the thoughts and activities of the early Christians, and which is represented in the apocalyptic drama of the Resurrection, the Last Judgment, the Messianic reign in the 'world to come.' It was, however, the most living element in that drama, and it succeeded in giving new life to the dead Messianic formulæ of Judaism because it was the Parousia of *Jesus* that was expected. It was especially one of the many forms in which was expressed the supreme significance of Jesus and the fact that all Christian hopes were centred in Him as the final victor over sin, Satan and death. In essence, therefore, it stood at the centre of the Christian faith, though in its pictorial form it was a belief borrowed bodily from Judaism. It is evident, however, that as an external eschatological form it soon became a danger to the Church, and John felt that it stood in need of being spiritualized and moralized before it could remain the permanent possession of the Church and Christian life. The value which it implies for a man like Paul is the supreme Christian ideal, but its form encouraged and embodied a strained 'other-worldly' and dualistic type of piety, tending to turn men's thoughts away from the tasks of the present, as it did among the

Thessalonians. The author of the Fourth Gospel was therefore led to substitute for it the belief in the abiding presence of Jesus with His disciples.

On the other hand, it has been claimed that "the social side of Christianity is, as it were, masked under the idea of the Parousia. It is masked but also conserved ; for so long as the idea of the Parousia remained, there was no fear that acquiescence in the present evil order would react hurtfully upon Christian faith and morality. Had it not been for the Parousia hope, the Early Church might have been prematurely hurled against the Empire as a revolutionary force, or through enforced acquiescence in its evils have become a merely pietistic association, a new Essenism on a larger scale."<sup>1</sup> That means to say that the belief in the Parousia played the same part in early Christianity which the doctrine of the inevitable Class War and the doctrine of the catastrophic Social Revolution have played in the history of modern Socialism.

#### VALUE OF THE IDEA OF THE PAROUSIA

The actual situations upon which the belief is brought to bear range from the unbelief of the Jews, both at the trial of Jesus and in the early history of the Church at Jerusalem, to the despair of the Christian disciples when face to face with persecution in the Apocalypse and elsewhere. In both cases an appeal is made to the Parousia of Jesus as the full justification of Christian faith and the full revelation of its truth. In its name defiance is hurled at the strongest enemies, and they are dared to do their worst.

It is plain that there was no appeal which gripped the early Christians in general more strongly than the appeal to the Parousia. Its basis was the Jewish doctrine of Retribution. It meant the punishment of the evildoer and the reward of the righteous. But in Paul and the other great figures the belief takes an ever higher and more spiritual form. Paul learnt later to inspire and

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Fairweather, *The Background of the Gospels*, p. 307; from Cairns, *Christianity in the Modern World*.

comfort himself with the hope of a full and perfect communion with the Lord after death rather than that of the Lord's visible presence on earth ; and in the end the Parousia becomes the symbol of a kingdom of spiritual glory ruled by Christ and God—the guarantee of the full possession of which is already present in the power and influence of the Spirit.

We have, therefore, in the New Testament Parousia an idea which covers almost all the forms of the early Christian ideal—from the crudest Jewish eschatology up to the Pauline identification of the Spirit of Christ with the Holy Spirit and to the Johannine identification of the Spirit with the Advocate. It is used in practice as the strongest inspiration to Christian moral activity, as a comfort in evil circumstances of all kinds, and it served to protect for the time being the supreme value of Jesus Christ ; while continually in its cruder forms it tended to encourage a strained, ecstatic, unbalanced type of piety, and at the same time a legal conception of God's relation to men—both of which were only sub-Christian in character and value.

These are some of the lines upon which our practical, ethical and educational study with regard to such an idea as the Parousia must proceed. The facts which emerge from such a study are those which the teacher of the New Testament must bear in mind when he comes to consider the question of the place and value of the whole eschatological world of the New Testament for his present-day task of making Christians.

## RESULTS OF THE STUDY

### THE VARIETY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

When the New Testament is studied from the point of view and for the purpose suggested in the preceding section, we get an almost bewildering impression of the wealth and variety of the interests and motives to which

the first Christian teachers appealed on behalf of their Gospel. We find ourselves in an armoury full of the weapons of Christian warfare in almost endless variety. In how many different ways, for instance, do the writers express what the Gospel brings to men ; what various ways they have of describing the Christian ideal of life. Now it is the Kingdom of God ; now Sonship to God the Father ; again it is union with Christ, and then life in the Spirit ; now it is communion with God, then the perfect life and again the life of love. It is forgiveness of sins, justification by faith, eternal life, the Cross, the Resurrection, reconciliation or peace with God and love towards God and the neighbour.

The motives and interests appealed to, the powers called upon on behalf of the ideal, are even more various in character than are the forms in which the ideal itself is expressed. Now they are almost crudely utilitarian and then they are purely spiritual. Now they are eschatological and then they are moral. They range from earthly prosperity and misfortune through heaven and hell to faith and hope and love.

The many forms in which the ideal and its different values and aspects are described are nowhere reduced to any recognizable system or unity. We find them there in the different writers, simply placed side by side as actually used on different occasions. Sometimes the different forms are inconsistent with each other even in the same writer. Sometimes also the ideal itself and the means employed to enforce it seem to us inconsistent with each other. Their untold wealth, however, and their almost endless variety when studied as they were actually used in the first and most heroic attempt ever made on behalf of the Gospel, become a supreme object-lesson for the Christian teacher.

It is for us to decide how far the material thus used in the first century still holds good for the Christian education of the youth and children of to-day. They are not of necessity the only means nor of necessity the best means for twentieth-century teachers to employ in order to effect the same purpose. It was certainly only for the men and women of the first century that the

material of the New Testament was created or borrowed and used. It was not written at all for children, and neither Jesus nor Paul was dreaming of a period of reconstruction after a great and disastrous European war.

### A GIFT AND A DEMAND

If one were allowed to voice in a few words the first message of the New Testament to us as Christian teachers, it would be in some such terms as the following :

“ These are the various forms in which the Christian Gospel, ideals and values were preached and taught when they first appeared, not systematically arranged, but simply side by side. This is human nature, this is human need as the first Christian teachers saw them ; these are the special conditions and needs which they tried to meet. These are the ways in which they met them ; these are the methods they used ; these are the motives and interests, the instruments they employed in their appeal when trying to change the men and the conditions in the direction of the ideal life of the Gospel. Once more they are not systematically arranged. They are not always consistent with each other, but they are here as they were actually used by very different men in very different circumstances.

“ It is now left to you to show that this ideal or Gospel, thus described, is still the ideal or Gospel for the twentieth century, and whether it can be so in any or all of its New Testament forms or not.

“ It is left to you to obtain such accurate knowledge of the men, women and children, the conditions and needs of your time, that you will be able to show how they are different or similar to those of the New Testament, and so adapt your teaching to those similarities or differences.

“ It is left to you, finally, to show how far the means and motives used in the New Testament are still effective in changing your conditions and your men, women and children in the direction of the Christian ideal.”

So may be described the first free gift of the New Testament to the modern Christian teacher, and such are its imperative demands upon him.

## EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF THE VARIETY

The kind of study that has been suggested, one may venture to call a more practical and educational interpretation of the contents of the New Testament than the ordinary methods provide. Even the first-fruits of such a study may be of direct use for the Christian teacher in his work, quite apart from any systematic valuation of them in relation to definite modern needs.

Many of our lessons and of our sermons should be devoted simply and solely to an objective transmission of the direct results of such a reading of the New Testament. Especially in our raw youth, when we have not very much direct personal Christian experience to fall back upon, such a practice would be refreshing both for teacher and pupil, for the preacher and his people. In any case, in these days, it is very necessary work. When we feel, as we must often do, that we have no very urgent personal message of our own to give, the most effective substitute is to put up another man to deliver his message in his own way through us. Such objective teaching and preaching, deliberately and openly undertaken, would save us from a good deal of compulsory hypocrisy.

Quite apart from its personal advantage, however, such a method enables us to show in an objective way, without any polemic, that in the actual Scriptures themselves, different and sometimes inconsistent views of the Christian aim and ideal, as well as very different methods of reaching them, stand side by side. There is no more effective and yet unobjectionable way not only of teaching the methods and results of modern Biblical Criticism, but also of inculcating the spirit of tolerance, than by objective descriptions of this kind. There might be given, for instance, objective pictures of Peter and Paul—with their different aims and methods, appealing to different motives and interests—yet both of them prominent disciples of Jesus. Or with equal effect one might give a practical interpretation of the Gospel of Mark, and side by side with it of the Fourth Gospel; or, of the Epistle to the Galatians side by side with the Epistle to the Hebrews,

comparing and contrasting them in their aims and ideals, in their methods and means.

The rich variety, therefore, of the New Testament and even its inconsistencies have an independent educational significance and value of their own which should not be neglected.

It is impossible, however, for the teacher to rest content in this variety, however rich it may be. It becomes inevitably a part of his educational task to inquire whether there is any possibility of reducing this variety into some kind of unity—to classify and harness the varied ideals, interests and motives of the New Testament in the service of a supreme end. If so, what is the nature of that unity? It has already become abundantly evident that there is in the writings themselves no ready-made or mechanical unity. This question will come before us again in another form. Here we only note that once more the New Testament leaves us face to face with a great demand. Out of its varied material we must get a clear picture of what the one Christian Gospel was at first, and of the manner in which it was in very varied forms and degrees incorporated in the life of the first century. It leaves us also with the imperative task of showing that that Gospel or one Christian end still remains the living Gospel for our time and needs. It leaves us also with the task of actually applying that Gospel to the details of our personal and social life to-day. It is our business, that is, to show that the practical acknowledgment of the redeeming God in Christ does solve for us the problems of life and the world.

For Books see Chapter V.

## CHAPTER V

### THE MODERN USE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. *Introductory*.—Two Series of Questions—Historical Documents and Modern Needs—Application of the Gospel Essential.
2. *Modern Valuation of New Testament in Detail*.—The Resurrection, its Forms and Meaning in the New Testament—Its Educational Problems—Modern Substitutes—Heaven and Hell.
3. ‘*Translation*’ of *New Testament for Modern Use*.—The Universal Language of the New Testament—Terms and Ideas almost Impossible to ‘Translate’—Paul and Jesus in Modern Education—Descriptions of Jesus—Homiletic *v.* Scientific Exegesis.
4. *Limitations to the Modern Use of the New Testament*.—Three Examples—The New Testament and a System of Ideals—Need of Consistent Teaching—Unity of New Testament in the Personality of Jesus—No Systematic Analysis of His Values—Hence Inevitable Variety of Interpretation.
5. *The Teacher’s Knowledge of the Modern World*.—The Teacher and Human Nature—The New Testament and its World—Study of Modern Men and their Conditions.
6. *The Modern Application of the Gospel*.—The Real Task of the Teacher—The Gaps in the New Testament—The Church and the World.
7. *The Social Contribution of the New Testament*.—The Social Message of the New Testament—Its Spirit, Attitude and Principles—The Demand of the New Testament.

### I

#### INTRODUCTORY

So far our treatment of the New Testament, from an educational point of view, has been concerned, on the one hand, with an historical study of its material as it met the needs of its own time and its first readers, providing them with the Christian ideal in many varied forms and

aspects, and with whatever helps and motive-power they seemed to need in their actual situation in order to move in its direction. On the other hand, a general valuation of its content and form has been suggested which revealed its fundamental features and qualities for the purpose of educative instruction, and which also emphasized in particular its peculiar adaptability to the needs, capacities and interests of Adolescence.

In order, however, to apply the material thus collected and the views thus suggested in the practical teaching of the New Testament, the modern educator must be prepared to carry the discussion one or two steps further. The issues of education are, after all, the living issues of the present and the future, and however fitted the New Testament may have been to supply the moral and religious educational needs of its own time and people, and however adapted its type of material in general may be for the human adolescent, it does not necessarily follow that all its ideas, ideals, motives and helps have the same value for the twentieth century as they had for the first. Nor does it follow that because the New Testament is fitted to supply the general and universal needs of youth, it is also capable of solving all the particular and special problems of the youth of the twentieth century in their peculiar modern forms—personal and social.

### TWO SERIES OF QUESTIONS

The fact is, as we have seen, that the New Testament comes to the teacher every time with a gift in one hand and a demand in the other. If it shows us the first great attempt to interpret and apply the Christian Gospel to a definite historical set of circumstances, it is at the same time and by its very nature a call upon us to face the inevitable question as to how this material is fitted to do the same work for our time. We must find out how far it will be effective for the Christian teacher to put our Christian experience, our Christian ideal and our appeal on its behalf into the forms and terms of the New Testament.

Before he can use the New Testament, therefore, with

any confidence, the teacher must ask himself these two series of questions :

(a) Have the particular events, ideas, books and personalities of the New Testament the same moral educational value to-day as they had in the first century ? Can they be used as confidently in the same way and for the same purpose ? Can they be used in the same form ? If not, how much of what we may call ' translation ' do they need in order to make them effective for our modern purposes ?

(b) Does the New Testament as a whole supply us with *all* the material that we need in order to present a satisfactory and adequate moral and religious ideal in a satisfactory form, with adequate motive-power for enforcing it and with satisfactory guidance for applying it in and through the circumstances of our time ? Or are there any important gaps and defects in the New Testament material from this point of view ? In other words, what exactly are the limitations to the value and use of the New Testament for modern life ?

Here, of course, nothing like a full discussion of such questions can even be attempted, and we must be satisfied with suggesting the various kinds of problems they involve. Two preliminary observations will help us to approach them in the right way and the right spirit.

#### THE NEW TESTAMENT AND MODERN NEEDS

1. A great deal depends upon whether we begin the discussion from the New Testament end, or from our experience of the actual needs of the present day. Something may be said for both methods. On the one hand, in moral and religious instruction (as is the case also with regard to secular instruction) we have entered into a long historical tradition which gives the Bible the central, if not an all-sufficing, place in the curriculum. On the other hand, both religion and education, we repeat, are nothing if they are not answers to actual living needs. To provide these answers effectively, we must in the end be free to choose as our educational

material the very best the world can offer in the Bible or out of it.

Occasionally these two points of view might naturally give us a different vision, but after our preliminary general valuation of the New Testament we may be justified in thinking that it is possible in the end to do justice to both at the same time. There must, however, be the constant reservation that where actual and imperative human need does come into serious conflict with the Biblical tradition, or with the New Testament itself, the latter must inevitably give way.

#### THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION ESSENTIAL TO THE GOSPEL

2. Another preliminary observation that must be made is that what we have in the material of the New Testament is not Christian principle or Christian ideal or Christian motive-power pure and simple—that is, in a permanent and universal form—but these always in some temporary historical form. Sometimes there may be an admixture of foreign sub-Christian or non-Christian elements; and always the principle, ideal or motive is found in a form applicable to the need of the first century, and so more or less clothed in a first-century garb.

Our definite task as teachers of the New Testament, therefore, is to strip the Christian Gospel, wherever that may be necessary, of its original historical garments and redress it in those of our own time. In every case what we must ask is, Does this New Testament idea, ideal or motive require any special adjustment to the language or needs or interests of our modern men, women or children? For instance, a principle which we have succeeded in picking out of the circumstances of the New Testament may in itself be available or adequate for our use, but the special application made of it to some actual situation in the New Testament may be more or less out of date or useless. That is the case with many of the concrete applications made by Paul in the first letter to the Corinthians (*e.g.* the meat offered to idols). Our duty as teachers then will be,

as it were, to squeeze the moral principle out of the original situation and to find some way of reapplying it to the new situation actually before us.

It needs to be emphasized that this whole process of application and reapplication is necessary to the Gospel and to our teaching. Because we can and do distinguish between the essential Christian Gospel and its variable practical consequences, we are sometimes tempted to think that we can and ought to confine our preaching and instruction to this essence. But the application itself, though it may vary from age to age, and even from person to person, is also absolutely necessary to the life and growth of the Gospel. We never actually find the pure or simple Gospel except in and through some definite application of its principle. The application we need, however, can seldom if ever be a mere transference of the New Testament application to our time. That is why, consciously or unconsciously, we must always carry through the complete process of unclothing the Gospel of its first-century dress and then reclothe it in new garments in every age.

## 2

### THE MODERN VALUATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

With this introduction we proceed to the discussion of our two series of questions.

The first series involves two somewhat different kinds of educational problems. One is concerned with the modern valuation of each particular incident, idea, ideal, motive, book and personality of the New Testament for educational purposes; while the other discusses the amount of 'translation' they may need in form and expression in order that that value may become effective in instruction.

#### THE RESURRECTION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Take, for instance, the belief in the Resurrection as it is found in the New Testament. It is evident that this

belief had a very significant value for Primitive Christianity. It is one of the main forms in which the early Christians expressed the Christian ideal, and it is also used extensively, both as motive and consolation, by their teachers. The Resurrection of Jesus especially was the occasion if not the cause of the rapid spread of Christianity ; and early Christian teaching and preaching was largely based upon it in some form or other. It certainly made a very strong and effective appeal to the men of the first century.

The question we now definitely raise is, What is its value and place in the spread of the Christian Gospel or the growth of Christian character to-day ? Can we appeal to it in the same form, for the same purpose and with the same effect as the first Christian teachers and preachers did ? Will it appeal in the same form to children of ten as it will to youths of eighteen, or women of thirty, or men of fifty ?

If we come to the conclusion, as every Christian teacher probably will, that the essential faith in the reality of the eternal life and its conquest over death—a faith which does lie behind the belief in the Resurrection—still represents one of the significant values we desire to preserve and increase, we are still left with the further problem of finding the most fitting and effective form through which to create and stimulate that faith.

#### EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS INVOLVED

The faith is found in many different forms in the New Testament. Now it is the empty tomb of Jesus ; now His bodily resurrection ; now it is expressed in visions of the Risen Jesus and now in the ' spiritual body ' of Paul. Now it is a part of the eschatological drama of the end, and so a future hope ; and again it is the ' eternal life ' of John, and so a present spiritual reality. Now it is the moral impression made by the character and personality of Jesus, and then the present influence of the Holy Spirit is its earnest and pledge. There are also other different expressions of what is essentially the same faith.

Are all of these forms of equal value to us to-day ?

Is there any reason to think that we can use one of them more effectively in the case of children, another for youth, and another still for maturity and old age? Do any or all of them require some amount of 'translation' in order to make them available and effective as appeals in our day?

Some of the New Testament forms are certainly more 'sympathetic' to modern ideas and language than others. Is that any sufficient reason for making a larger use of them in instruction, or have we more real need of other forms more foreign to our pet ideas? We must remember that our purpose is not to pander to fugitive modern whims, but to serve the Christian Gospel in order to satisfy legitimate modern needs in distinction from passing modern wants. Must we, for instance, eliminate the eschatological drama of the Resurrection, or can we preserve its essential value by translating it into some other more or less eschatological form of belief more consonant with our modern view of the world? How far are we justified in using the term Resurrection at all if we do not use it in its New Testament sense of the soul rising again from Sheol?

#### MODERN SUBSTITUTES

We cannot stop even here with our questioning. Can we find what we need for conserving the essential faith in a life after death in *any* of the New Testament forms of belief in the Resurrection, whether translated into modern terms or not? Shall we be forced in the end to search for some quite other form and expression as a means of conserving this value? For instance, shall we depend more upon the spread of an ethical interpretation of the universe or upon a deepened conviction of the infinite value of man and the individual as many modern philosophers seem to suggest? Or shall we walk in the ways of Positivism and trust in an immortal humanity? Shall we search for our panacea in the darkening by-paths of Theosophy or Spiritism, or shall we even trust the vicarious deaths of the battlefield to open the immortal doors before us as many orthodox popular preachers seem inclined to do?

From this long cross-examination it will be seen that we are ultimately thrown among the most living moral and religious educational issues, and the need of a deliberate and careful study of this kind is becoming more and more imperative every day.

### THE ESCHATOLOGY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Such a discussion of the Resurrection would lead almost inevitably to the wider question of the whole Eschatology of the New Testament with its Parousia, Judgment, Heaven and Hell. At present the educational situation with regard to these is that they have either disappeared altogether from our instruction or they retain merely a formal place in it because they *are* in the New Testament, which by our ordinary methods cannot be taught without them. The belief, however, is growing that these eschatological pictures do, in their own way, represent some intrinsic or instrumental values in the moral and religious life, well worth conserving for future generations. Having, however, practically eliminated the New Testament forms of these values, we have not yet found, nor even seriously tried to find, some satisfactory substitute for them. In attempting to 'translate' such motives as the eschatological Heaven and Hell or in searching for satisfactory substitutes, it will probably be necessary often to remind ourselves that our need is two-fold. We must, that is, see to it that the means we employ are not only such as can get a sure grip upon the actual people we are dealing with, but are also consistent with the moral and spiritual end for which we are working. They must be in and for themselves in some way good and Christian as well as effective.

### 'TRANSLATION' OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

This may serve as a more or less typical example of the kind of study that is meant when we speak of a modern

educational valuation and 'translation' of the New Testament material in detail.

The Christian teacher is in urgent need of a systematic discussion on these lines with regard to all the forms and expressions given to the ideals and motives, ends and means, ideas and events, books and personalities which make up the New Testament and early Christianity.

In going over the contents of the New Testament with such questions as the above in our minds, we shall probably find a call for almost all degrees of 'translation'—from the mere translation of the words to a radical transformation of the thought—in order to make the New Testament real and effective in our day.

### THE UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Such expressions as 'Our Father,' 'God is Love,' 'The pure in heart shall see God,' and many other expressions which belong to the heart and soul of the New Testament need no translation at all. They speak the universal, direct and simple language of the human heart and experience. The only strange thing to us in them is the original language in which they were spoken.

At the other extreme, however, such expressions as 'the man of sin' or 'Antichrist' will naturally stand at the bottom of our scale of values and require a very radical transformation before they can be used at all with any effect in our moral and religious instruction. To translate them into modern forms and modern terms is almost impossible even if it were worth the energy and time spent upon the task.

In between these two extremes, almost all degrees of adaptation will be required to make the New Testament material educationally effective. Jesus, for instance, in His teaching, life, character and personality, is not only much more primary and central for early Christianity than Paul, but also requires very much less 'translation' to make him the most effective and the indispensable element in the moral and religious education of modern youth. In fact, the only serious difficulty in this respect,

so far as the main body of the Synoptic presentation is concerned, springs from the Messianic idea in its Jewish eschatological form.

### JESUS IN EDUCATION

There are, however, numerous presentations and descriptions of Jesus in the New Testament which provide a good example of the very various degrees of relativity to the first century to be observed in the ideas of the New Testament. He is Jesus, Master, Teacher, Shepherd, Bishop, Prophet, Priest, King, Judge, Lord, Saviour, Redeemer, Mediator, Christ, Son of David, Son of Man, Son of God, Lamb of God, Last Adam, Only-begotten Son and the Word of God. Some of these are universally intelligible and at the same time represent the supreme values, which were revealed in Jesus, both for the first century and for all ages. They therefore have peculiar educative power. Some stand much further away from the main spiritual values revealed in Jesus and also require a far more complicated process of interpretation and translation to make them intelligible for modern man and effective for educational purposes. Sometimes, also, owing to our familiarity with the language of the New Testament and the apparent simplicity of the terms themselves, some of the above descriptions seem to be much more intelligible than they really are. To most modern readers, such a title as 'The Son of Man' is really only an empty phrase so far as the appreciation of its characteristic meaning in the New Testament is concerned. Usually, indeed, the meaning associated with it (namely, as emphasizing the humanity of Jesus) is far removed from its original use in Judaism and the Gospels.

So much is this the case with regard to some of the most familiar sayings in the New Testament that the question must often arise whether it would not be better for general educational purposes to rest content with a conventional and traditional interpretation rather than attempt laboriously to make intelligible to the modern reader their more exact and historical meaning in the

New Testament itself. An example may make clear the dilemma.

### HOMILETIC AND SCIENTIFIC EXEGESIS

"For God so loved the world," says the Fourth Gospel, "that He gave His Only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Most of those who are very familiar with these words interpret them as the simplest, completest and most directly religious and evangelical description of the meaning of Christianity to be found in the New Testament. That, in a way, is quite true. This actually does underlie the saying, but the popular interpretation almost entirely disregards the typically Johannine meaning and atmosphere of almost every word in the passage. 'World,' 'gave,' 'Only-begotten,' 'believeth in Him,' 'perish' and 'everlasting life'—all represent peculiarly Johannine thoughts—theological and metaphysical—which overlay, as in a palimpsest, the simpler, direct expression of Christian experience. Whether, however, it would be worth while attempting to rescue that exact Johannine articulation of the Gospel in this case for any but technical students, is very doubtful. It would depend partly upon the view taken of the comparative value for the general moral and religious life and progress of the two following factors which are involved.

On the one hand, it is undoubtedly a great educational gain to have imprinted upon the mind of youth such brief and compact symbolic representations which are interpreted as clearly summarizing in a simple way the supreme values of Christian experience. On the other hand, the divorce of the educational or the homiletic use of Biblical sayings from scientific and historical accuracy of exegesis must, in the long run, exert an evil influence upon the health and progress of the moral and religious life.

In this case, very probably the positive gain would outweigh the loss—because the aim of both the traditional interpretation and the Johannine writer was one and the same, and therefore the divorce between scientific accuracy and homiletic use is not in this case as complete

as it often is. Generally speaking, however, it is the duty of the Christian teacher to avoid and to discourage this kind of dualism in his teaching so far as possible. It has been an evil influence both in the pulpit and the Sunday School.

## 4

## THE LIMITATIONS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Such a conclusion, however, brings us into the very midst of the second series of questions which we must face as soon as we begin to make practical use of the material of the New Testament for the purposes of moral and religious education.

These questions were concerned, it will be remembered, not with particular valuations of the various items of the New Testament material, but with the character and range of that material as a whole. In effect, we have to ask how far the New Testament provides us with *all* that we need as modern teachers for our instruction even in so far as it concerns only the presentation and the application of the Christian Gospel. The effectiveness of the use we make of the New Testament depends upon a definite consciousness, not only of the positive help which it is capable of bringing and does bring to our instruction, but also of what it does not and cannot contribute to our need.

### TYPICAL EXAMPLES OF ITS LIMITATION

Valuable and even indispensable as is the New Testament for the modern Christian teacher, there are evidently some very definite limits to the help that it can bring him. There are still some very important needs that it cannot satisfy and cannot be expected to satisfy. The teacher and preacher must look elsewhere for some things that are absolutely necessary for the moral and religious instruction of our day. Indeed, as we have seen, the very help that the New Testament brings is conditional upon that help being supplemented from other sources.

Here, we must be content with giving three examples of what we may call this inherent inability of the New Testament to supply in full what we need. All three are necessary consequences of the historical and practical character of the New Testament—the limitations imposed upon it by its very nature. Historical documents intended definitely for their own age must necessarily be limited in their horizon both as regards time and range of subjects. The New Testament, therefore, just because it met the specific needs and took upon it the specific forms of the first century, cannot (1) give us in any prepared form such a system of moral ideals based on the Gospel as we need to meet the specific needs of the twentieth century ; nor (2) give us that knowledge which, as teachers, we must have of those specific needs and forms of life themselves ; nor (3) can it give us any direct and full guidance as to the best means of enforcing our ideals. Especially, it cannot directly show us how the Gospel may be united with those features of modern life which were not within the range of the first Christian teachers and preachers. These limitations we will proceed to discuss in this order.

#### THE NEW TESTAMENT AND A SYSTEM OF VALUES

With regard to the first, one of the imperative conditions of any permanently effective teaching ministry is that the teacher or preacher should be in possession of some fairly unified system of thought and life as a general background for every sermon and every lesson. This need not of necessity be a technical system of theological doctrines, but it must include, at any rate, a fairly consistent view of the ideal or some system of ideals for which he is working, some consistent system of motives with which to enforce those ideals, and some consistent system of practical helps towards living them. Every sermon and every lesson may make some definite and special impression of its own, but there should be certainly a cumulative and consistent impression from lesson to lesson and from sermon to sermon. Indeed, permanent impressions on mind and heart and will,

that is, on the character, are generally cumulative in their nature and not instantaneous. A single lesson or a single sermon may and sometimes does achieve great temporary success by arousing some explosive emotion, or by creating an impulse which can immediately find expression, but it is a slowly growing accumulation of impressions that usually exercises permanent control over life. For this it is essential that the hearer or scholar should feel that the different impressions he gets, one after another, all belong together somehow, and that he should be progressively introduced through them into the same world of feeling, thought, experience and life.

#### THE CONSISTENCY OF THE TEACHER

It is probably impossible for any one who has to be constantly preaching sermons or giving instruction never to give expression to opinions that are inconsistent; but in order to be permanently effective, teaching must be consistent enough in the ideals presented and in the motives to which appeal is made to make some unified general impression upon those who listen to it.

To describe the ideal to-day as obedience to the absolute laws of the world and God, and to-morrow as the life of freedom; now as life in the Holy Spirit, and then as union with Christ; to-day as communion with God, and to-morrow as love and service of men—this must become a source of bewilderment rather than of education if no attempt is made to bring all the descriptions into some sort of relation to one another as parts of one definite system of life and thought.

We may talk of reconstruction as much as we like, but it will never come to anything worth bothering about, unless behind it there are some dominating moral and spiritual convictions spreading their light and power over the whole realm of life. A world that is full of a myriad different plans but bankrupt in ideals, conviction and faith will only gravitate back to the old rut once more, and with added impetus in the end.

Whether we can in reality teach the New Testament or not depends largely upon whether we can get out of

it such a system of ideals and motives as will satisfy the deepest needs of the world.

### UNITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT IN JESUS

Here, certainly, the New Testament comes a long way at least towards satisfying the need of the Christian teacher—and yet not by any means all the way. He will find in the New Testament certainly different strata of life, different levels of living, but amidst all the varied elements in these writings he can still recognize the really distinct spirit and life contributed to the world by the Christian movement embodied in many different forms.

It is only in personality that this spirit of life can be fully and adequately expressed. The unity that is behind and in the New Testament is a living unity. It is a spiritual unity in the full sense of that term. Jesus Himself is the Gospel of the New Testament because He is incalculably the purest, simplest, most direct and fullest expression of its spirit and life.

### SYSTEMATIC ANALYSIS OF THE 'VALUES' IN JESUS

He remains and will remain the Gospel and its standard incorporation unless and until there is revealed in the history of mankind a life of higher and fuller spiritual values than His, bringing with it a stronger moral dynamic and expressing itself in fresher, more direct and more universal forms. If and when that comes we shall surely know it, but at present it is beyond even our imagination.

Yet, just because our Gospel still comes to us in, through and as an historical personality, the modern teacher is reminded that its ideal life, as it is found even in Jesus Himself, is cast in the mould of the first and not of the twentieth century. It must, therefore, remain his task to show that for our time and conditions, Jesus does reveal a consistent system of ideals or values 'worthy of all acceptance.' The New Testament does not undertake that task for him. There is nowhere in it any systematic analysis of Jesus, nor any attempt to make a scale or system of the moral and spiritual values incarnate

and revealed in Him. Out of Jesus, we must get it by a progressive interpretation—led by one or other of the supreme categories found for Him by New Testament writers, or led by some other adequate category created by His influence upon the thought of man since the time of the New Testament.

That is why, so long as Jesus thus remains the highest life incarnate in history, it is the duty and the right of every generation (and even of every disciple) to reinterpret and to revalue Him for every new age and situation—to make, that is, its own analysis and application of the spiritual values embodied in Him for the satisfaction of the needs of its own life.

#### THE INEVITABLE VARIETY OF INTERPRETATION

The variety of interpretations is inevitable until we shall have found the one adequate category that can hold together all His values. So far, all the different historical interpretations of Jesus fall into a few fairly well-defined types, and every well-equipped teacher will soon find in one variation or other of them his own personal interpretation, which ought to and will inevitably become the background, content and end of all his teaching.

## 5

#### THE TEACHER'S KNOWLEDGE OF THE MODERN WORLD

The second necessary limitation in the help to be expected from the New Testament concerns the knowledge which every competent teacher must have of his own age and time—its men, women and children, and their actual conditions and special needs. It is, of course, the actual and varied needs of man, personal and social, that provide the first justification for the existence of the teacher. It is a realization of those needs that gives him and his calling a real place in the economy of life.

### THE TEACHER AND HUMAN NATURE

One of his main qualifications is an effective knowledge of the personal and social life as it actually is in the men, women and children whom he sets out to teach, their best and their worst, their virtues and their vices, what is difficult and what is easy for them to do, their triumphs and their defeats, their joys and their sorrows, their temptations and their trials.

How far can and does the New Testament help him to obtain possession of such knowledge?

It is, of course, true that there are deep abiding features in human nature, and that there are human needs fundamentally the same in all ages. The Christian Gospel is intended to meet those needs. That is why it may be the Gospel for the twentieth as for the first century. It is also quite as true that though man is thus always the same, men and the conditions of life are always changing. That is why the forms of the Gospel, as well as the teaching and preaching of the Gospel, must be different for different men and times. It is only by meeting the changes in men and conditions that the permanence of the Gospel can be vindicated.

### THE WORLD OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

So, by emphasizing the fact that each writing of the New Testament was deliberate teaching for its own time and conditions, and was always in touch with those conditions, the inference is made inevitable that if we wish to teach and to preach in the spirit, and on the lines of the New Testament, it must be teaching and preaching for the twentieth century and always in touch with its specific conditions.

On the other hand, by revealing the actual conditions of the first century in the Roman Empire, the modern study of the New Testament has also incidentally shown us how different in many respects they were from ours. It has, therefore, made plain the gap that must be filled by the teacher if he wishes to present and apply the Christian Gospel effectively to his own time. He cannot

find the point of contact for his Gospel simply in the New Testament, but is driven by the call of the New Testament itself to a study of his own age, both from a psychological and a sociological point of view.

It is plain that the New Testament cannot itself give him this knowledge. It can only compel him to face the absolute need for such a knowledge.

The study to which the teacher is thus driven is of two kinds. First of all, it is a study of universal human nature ; and, secondly, of the particular human nature of our modern world, of our own country and of our own pupils. With regard to the former, which will always remain the more important, a careful study of the New Testament can still help us very considerably. Our attention has already been directed to what we may call the human nature of the New Testament—the fact that it is a human product and a real part of the human world. Simply to read it from that point of view is a great lesson in the knowledge of man, of universal human nature. It is a unique revelation of the human heart. Its interpretation and exegesis are becoming more and more psychological in character, with its emphasis upon experience and personality rather than upon doctrine.

#### STUDY OF MODERN MEN AND CONDITIONS

All this, however, will not take us very far in reading and understanding the signs of our time. For that we must depend ultimately upon our own contact with our own world—with the actual conditions of the world into which the Gospel must be inserted—its personal and social problems, its education and its politics, its economic interdependence and rivalries, its labour questions and its international difficulties, its alienation from the Church and its poor substitutes for religion, its intellectual chaos and moral helplessness—all the features that help to distinguish it from every other age in history.

The time is surely coming, if it has not already come, when men who have been overwhelmed in this welter will begin to read the New Testament with a new anxiety to find out the help it can give them in meeting the

problems—personal and social—which they have utterly failed to solve without it. There is some danger that their search may lead to disappointment at first, because they will be apt to expect a great deal more than the New Testament can possibly provide for their guidance. It is only teachers who know both the age and the New Testament from the inside sympathetically, that can so mould and moderate their expectations and also bring to the fore their deepest needs in such a way as to enforce the Gospel in their lives.

## 6

## THE MODERN APPLICATION OF THE GOSPEL

Once we do know something of the age in which we live, with its urgent needs, problems and interests, we find ourselves still facing a task which the New Testament by itself cannot help us adequately to perform.

## THE REAL TASK OF THE TEACHER

The third condition of effective teaching is a knowledge of ways and means whereby the actual life lived by men can be transformed progressively in the direction of the ideal. The task of the teacher is to bring to bear upon his scholars such various influences as have this transforming power. To know these means and to be able to use them well is the real original work of the teacher. The ideal in its essence is already there, given in the Gospel. The actual conditions which must somehow be adjusted to it are facing him all the time. These are, in a sense, the fixed points between which he moves. His real business is to find the power and use the proper means in order to change the actual into the ideal.

All the world is open to him in his search for these. He can appeal to all the motives that move men, the hopes that do actually inspire them, the fears that haunt them, family instincts and national sentiments, self-respect and love and loyalty—all these and many more, in addition to the sheer attractive power of the ideal itself, are at his

service—so long as he remembers that he is a teacher of the Christian Gospel, and that therefore his means as well as his ends must be Christian in their character or at least consistent with or capable of serving Christian ends.

Here, again, the New Testament comes a long way to meet him, but leaves him also long before he reaches the end of his journey. It does offer him such a wealth and variety of material of the kind he needs as to be almost embarrassing, and it shows him that material as it was actually used for the general purpose he has in view. In it almost every chord in the human heart is struck and struck again in order to move men towards Christ. But here, again, once more we are warned that what we have in the New Testament from this point of view is an unclassified record—almost a bewildering chaos—of the motives and means used by first-century preachers to meet the needs of first-century men and to influence them in the direction of the Gospel. The New Testament cannot help us to decide whether any or all of these means will effect the same purpose to-day. For that kind of help the teacher must look outside the New Testament and himself become responsible for the result. For permanent influence, as we have seen, some kind of consistency in his appeals he must have, for it will be futile for him to threaten the same people with hell one day and the next day rely upon the sheer moral and spiritual power of love to lead them. Indirectly, of course, and especially so far as the personal life of men is concerned, the guidance of the New Testament still stands absolutely unique in this respect.

#### THE GAPS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

There is, however, a far more serious limitation to the guidance provided for the modern teacher by the New Testament in attempting to find effective means of applying the Christian Gospel to modern life as well as to the range of material offered to him in the New Testament for that purpose.

The more specifically modern problems are almost all social, and the most critical challenge which Christianity

and the Christian Gospel have to meet is primarily neither personal nor intellectual but social. It is a challenge to apply the Gospel practically to the growth of social life in all its forms. And it is here that historical Christianity and the New Testament leave the Christian teacher to all appearance in the lurch. On the surface, at any rate, there are large gaps here in the teaching of the New Testament. The main modern social problems do not seem to have been within the horizon of the first missionaries of the Gospel. At any rate, they do not seem to have made any definite attempts to apply the Gospel in these regions.

Is there here really a gap in the Gospel itself, as some have held, or is this comparative absence of contact with social problems only another illustration of the way in which the first Christian teachers kept close to the actual problems before them? Can the Christian Gospel be brought into any vital and effective contact with these significant elements in our age? Is there any real room for them in the life of the Gospel, or must we say that it is so far incomplete and requires the prophetic ministry of a Luther, for instance, to complete it? Here we have one of the main tests at present applied to the New Testament.

### THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD

It is useless to think that as Christian teachers we can in any way evade the issue. We must either moderate our claims upon men or we must go forward with much more enterprise to the task of showing that there can be, and ought to be, a Christian society, Christian education, Christian politics, Christian industry and Christian international relations. The world is waiting to hear something more from the Church than a proclamation of principles or protests against evils, although even here the Church has lamentably failed in its duty in recent years. No progress, however, can be made with regard to social reconstruction in any direction until Christian teachers can give some positive guidance based on the principles of the Gospel and knowledge of the facts of the situation. It is evading the issue to say that we do not know enough

about educational, political, industrial and international conditions to do what is required. It is our business co-operatively or personally to get the requisite knowledge or to see that those who have the knowledge use it in the service of the Gospel. The least that we can do is deliberately to set ourselves to train a new generation that will be more capable than we are of applying the Christian Gospel to the social situation.

## THE SOCIAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

It is not our task here to discuss this issue as a whole. What we are mainly concerned with is to call attention to the character and range of the contribution of the New Testament to its solution. That must be indeed one of the first steps towards adopting the proper Christian attitude. Does the New Testament give us any help at all to meet the social situation ? If so, exactly what kind of help ? Does it reveal to us the spirit in which men should live their social life ? Can it give us also the principles in accordance with which social life should be organized and its problems solved ? Does it provide us with anything that can be called a Christian programme in these matters ? Is it our only resource to fall back upon the fundamental nature of the Gospel itself and on our own responsibility to apply it in what seems to us the right way ? If the New Testament cannot give us sufficient guidance to apply the Gospel in detail to all departments of social life, then we must seek it elsewhere. It is our first duty, however, to find out exactly how far the New Testament is capable of taking us, and there is urgent need of intelligent instruction on the point.

### THE SOCIAL MESSAGE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

To what extent and on what matters is the Christian disciple pledged in his social attitude and activities, and where does his liberty of opinion begin ?

It is evident that there is no such thing as a practical social programme in the New Testament. That is part of its natural and inevitable limitation. It does not and cannot do our thinking and our organizing for us. It is evident also that its primary interest is not in institutions and organizations but in men, and first of all in individual men. It is to individuals that it makes its first appeal, and it is through individuals that it works.

If Jesus, however, is the incorporation of our Gospel, then His disciples and His Church *are* pledged to a personality intensely social in spirit, to a very comprehensive conception of Christian service and salvation, to certain broad social principles and convictions, in the light of which that service must be given, and to an intelligent and persistent attempt to apply that spirit and those principles specifically to the social circumstances of their time and generation. One may also be justified in adding that there are certain tasks and duties imposed upon a Christian people by the very nature of the Gospel itself—such tasks, for instance, as the cure of poverty and the elimination of disease. We must also realize very keenly before we finish reading the New Testament that the Kingdom of God cannot be established by organization, nor simply by the reform of laws and institutions. The present high estimation of outward civilization in general and of luxury in particular seems incompatible with the spirit of Jesus, and where wealth is owned at all such ownership is evangelically permissible only when it is accompanied by a vivid consciousness of its immense obligations.

#### ITS SPIRIT, ATTITUDE AND PRINCIPLES

“ It has been aptly said that ‘ Christ views social phenomena from above, in the light of His religious vocation. He approaches them from within through the development of personality. He judges them from their end, as contributing to the Kingdom of God.’ Four great principles stand out clearly from His teaching. God is our Father and all men are our brethren. The Kingdom of God is at hand. Life is the measure of

true value. All disciples are stewards. While in some passages a sudden apocalyptic coming of our Lord is suggested, His teaching involves, at least as often, a regeneration of human society here and now through the working of the law of righteousness and love, and in the background of it stands the message of social righteousness delivered by the prophets of the Old Testament. God's Kingdom implies God's reign over the whole of human conduct and carries with it a fellowship among His subjects. There is to be a Christian society, a People of God, a Church, which shall be the light, the salt, the leaven of human life. But this Society is rather the means of realizing the Kingdom than the Kingdom itself. Life at its highest is the knowledge of God, but all human life comes within our Lord's purpose. Life itself is carefully distinguished from the material means of living ; the service of Mammon is typical of the spirit of the 'Kingdom of this age.' Wealth is dangerous ; and detachment from preoccupation with wealth is the first mark of the subjects of God's Kingdom."<sup>1</sup>

### THE DEMAND OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

So far the New Testament does actually take us and the Gospel for the sake of which the New Testament exists. It provides us, moreover, with numerous illustrations of the way in which the first teachers did actually apply their principles to the social as well as the personal problems of their day. It leaves us with the demand that we should in the same way answer to the call of our time. It does not and cannot tell us how to do it. When we want to know the relation of Bolshevism, Socialism, Capitalism, Strikes, War, Nationalism and a thousand other features of our time to the Christian Gospel ; when we have to apply the principles of the Gospel to the Church, Politics, Education, Industry, the State and any other forms of social organization, we shall not find the answers ready-made in the New Testament ; but it demands that we should search diligently for the answers for ourselves and act courageously on our own responsibility. On all

<sup>1</sup> *Christianity and Industrial Problems*, pp. 27-8.

these points there is urgent need of Christian solutions, and it is a definite part of the task of the Christian teacher to make full use of the New Testament for that purpose, taking it as far as ever it will go, and making clear the exact value of its contribution.

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## CHAPTER VI

### THE CHRISTIAN TEACHER AND HIS TASK

1. *New Tasks and Responsibilities.*—Summary of Previous Chapters—The Changed Situation—The Integrity of the Teacher—His Sphere of Work Enlarged.
2. *The Teacher's Relation to the New Testament.*—Deliverance from the Tyranny of the Letter—A Spiritual Relation—The Personal Life of the Teacher.
3. *The Common Task of All Teachers.*—A Teaching Fellowship—All Teachers engaged in making Men.
4. *Teaching the Christian Gospel.*—The Background and Content of the New Testament—The Preparatory Work to be kept in its Place—Finding the Soul and the Power of the New Testament—The New Testament and the Gospel—The Traditional Idea of the Gospel—The Gospel in History.
5. *The Nature of the Christian Gospel.*—Faith in Christ and the Faith of Jesus Himself—The Organic View of the Gospel and its Expressions—Intellectual Statements Necessary but Inadequate—Teaching the Gospel means spreading the Spirit, Life and Principles of Jesus—Methods and Agencies, Old and New—A Campaign of Christian Education.

### I

#### NEW TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

WE have now described the main conditions under which the teacher of the New Testament must do his work—the general guidance he can obtain from the principles and methods of modern education, and the character of the material with which he has to deal.

We suggested the main lines on which an educational interpretation can be given to the New Testament as a whole and in detail. We have also attempted to define the value and place of the New Testament material in

the process of education, to describe the extent and nature of its positive contribution, and to mark out the necessary limitations to its modern use as an educational instrument.

Before passing on to discuss the particular problems involved in the task of teaching the New Testament, it may now be possible, in the light of the preceding discussions, to indicate more definitely and more systematically than we have yet done the nature and meaning of that task, both in relation to the wider interests of education generally, and in its bearing upon the personal position and attitude of the teacher himself.

Our literary, historical and educational interpretation of the New Testament at once places the Christian teacher in a position far freer and far more responsible than ever before.

### THE CHANGED SITUATION

He must now appear before his pupils, and before all men, without shield or armour, as it were, taking nothing for granted but the actual facts and postulates of human life and human nature. There was a time when he could build confidently upon a certain theory of the Bible, to be accepted without discussion or proof. Now, the validity and value of what he has to say can depend only upon actual facts which can be tested by ordinary human methods in the same way as all other facts of a similar kind. He does not ask men to take what he says on blind, unreasoning trust to any greater extent than is done in other departments of human experience and knowledge. If any one likes to obtain the necessary qualifications he can test for himself everything that is said. It is deeper and deeper inquiry that is desired most of all. The teacher dare not shelter himself behind any dogmatic theory of the origin or authority of the Bible. He dare not hide behind the New Testament itself from the shafts and arrows of criticism. He must be ready to lay bare even the very foundations of life itself, and see whether they are well and truly laid.

### THE INTEGRITY OF THE TEACHER

This inevitably means harder work, greater responsibility and greater courage, but it means also the redemption of the integrity of the teacher himself, both moral and intellectual. *That*, in itself, is one of the greatest of personal gains for him.

There has been lurking in the minds of even naturally religious people a dark suspicion that the ordinary canons of thought and judgment have no validity in Christian teaching and preaching. The Sunday-school teacher, as well as the preacher, they say or think, has to preach and to teach what the Bible says, because it is in the Bible and not because it is really a positive truth for life in general or because he really believes what he says. The fundamental honesty and integrity of the ordinary preacher is widely and seriously doubted. Thorough intellectual integrity in the pulpit is a matter for surprise and bewilderment. The first thing which a public teacher of Christianity has to do in these days, if he wishes to get into living touch with men, is to redeem his moral and intellectual integrity at almost any cost. It is a much more valuable asset on the side of the Gospel than any success he may attain by means of his eloquence or his brilliancy.

The modern criticism of the New Testament, it is true, cannot purchase his honesty for him, but by compelling him to throw away the artificial protection of a Bible, a quotation from which is supposed to establish any truth, it makes the redemption of his honesty possible and much easier.

### THE SPHERE OF HIS WORK ENLARGED

The very thing, however, which enables the teacher to establish his honesty and integrity at the start also vastly enlarges the sphere of his work. The range of his teaching or preaching is inevitably widened. New tasks are laid upon him, and these mean new opportunities. Since he cannot now start by silently taking for granted that the New Testament is the last court of appeal and

that its written word is a final external authority, he is compelled to lay the foundations of his message deeper down and deal at first hand with the fundamental issues of life. That means a nearer approach to the universal human standpoint, more reality and more living contact with the actual facts of life.

The Christian teacher must now show not only that there is a direct way from the Bible into life, but also from life itself into the New Testament. He must not only try to make the ideals of life conform to the truths of the New Testament, but also to test the statements of the New Testament by the facts of life. Indeed, the particular kind of teaching that is most needed in our time is the teaching that will make the New Testament once more a living book, a book by live men to living men. Even those who are closely identified with the Churches, as well as those who are outside them, stand in great need of this kind of teaching. It is only very rarely that the Christian teacher can take for granted in his pupils of all ages much knowledge of the contents, meaning and value of the New Testament. Generally the best that we find is a vague kind of more or less inherited belief in the supreme value of the 'Bible.' The people who hold such a belief are continually in need of teaching that will clarify their ideas of the kind of value we have in the Bible, that will make them realize how the Bible has acquired that value, and how in detail it has sprung out of life. That means to say they are always in need of transforming their inherited belief into a living faith, by being compelled again and again to build it up from the foundations.

## 2

### THE TEACHER'S RELATION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT

#### FREEDOM FROM THE TYRANNY OF THE LETTER

The modern Christian teacher has thus been given an opportunity to redeem his moral and intellectual integrity.

He has also been compelled to undertake a more fundamental and living kind of teaching. The same process, however, has also delivered him from the tyranny of the letter of the New Testament. He has been delivered from all those arbitrary methods of exegesis and interpretation—spurious homiletic uses of single phrases and texts, the licence of allegorical methods and the vagaries of the ingenuity exercised on predictions and apocalypses—methods which are the inevitable consequence of insistence on the letter of Scripture. We have been compelled to recognize radical differences in value between sayings and to go behind the letter and the individual statements to the books of which they form a part and to the life and experience expressed in them. The letter becomes the handmaid of faith instead of being the tyrant of thought and belief.

This, however, does not mean that the Christian teacher is cast adrift from the moorings of the New Testament. Modern study has shown more clearly than ever how dependent he is in reality upon the New Testament. It is the only record of the founder, the foundation and first spread of the Christian Religion, the record of its formative age and of the classical types of the life it produces. From the New Testament we get our clearest knowledge of the Christian Gospel and ideal as well as of the various forms it took in the hands of its first teachers.

### A SPIRITUAL RELATION

The difference now is that this tie with the New Testament is not one of the letter but of the spirit. It is a relation, to use Paul's phrase, 'in Christ.' It not only allows but compels us to ask how the letter is connected with the spirit of the New Testament and what is the exact relation between it and the Christian Gospel.

The practical effect, therefore, of our previous discussions, so far as the personal attitude of the Christian teacher in relation to his task is concerned, may be described in brief as follows. The redemption of his intellectual integrity is secured, inasmuch as his dealing with the New Testament no longer implies the initial

acceptance of a ready-made theological dogma which cannot be examined in open court.

He is compelled to face more fundamental questions which concern the validity and value of the New Testament in general and in detail. He is delivered from the tyranny of the letter of the New Testament, inasmuch as the value of its written word depends upon the spiritual life and experience it expresses.

The real nature of the relation between the teacher and the New Testament has been revealed as, first of all, historical, and then a spiritual relation. He is bound to it in the same sense as he is bound to the historic Christian Church, namely, in so far only as it preserves the Christian Gospel in spirit and atmosphere.

#### THE PERSONAL LIFE OF THE TEACHER

All this demands not only much harder and sterner work, but also a much fuller and richer personal religious life on the part of the teacher. For this there can be no substitute at all. No amount of objective respect for the record, no amount of historical faithfulness and no amount of intellectual honesty—important and necessary as these are—can ever make up for the lack of a personal experience of the moral and spiritual power of the Gospel. The historian and the philosopher may do a great deal for the New Testament and its interpretation, but merely as such they can never teach it in any full sense. That can only be done finally by the intelligent Christian disciple whose soul is continually fed by the Lord of the New Testament and of all life.

Naturally, as compared with the traditional attitude towards the Bible, the attitude we have described may involve the danger of a rather pronounced subjectivity. That cannot be avoided, but its responsibility must be bravely shouldered, and it is partly compensated for by the emphasis on the historical objectivity of the Christian Gospel which will come to light in the following section.

## THE COMMON TASK OF ALL TEACHERS

So far, we have been dealing mainly with the more personal attitude of the Christian teacher in approaching his task. The task itself requires some fuller description and definition.

If the discussions of the previous chapters mean anything they mean that once more, as in the early days of Christianity, the Christian teacher must stand shoulder to shoulder in the ranks of the vast army of the teachers of the human race, sharing in the same great task, burdened with the same great responsibilities, meeting the same difficulties and enjoying the same and only the same rights, privileges and opportunities.

## A TEACHING FELLOWSHIP

Into this wide fellowship the Christian teacher should enter with enthusiasm, for it means that he and his task are no longer to be washed into an isolated backwater and kept there, but that he is to join with the mighty throng of those who sail the wide waters of the river of life. He will rejoice in this not only because his own work will be kept constantly in touch with the realities of the common life, but also because the task of all other educators will be widened in outlook and deepened in spirit by constant touch with the rich and inspiring material which he can bring to the common store. His moral authority will increase in proportion to his success in bringing his material into closer and closer contact with the living needs of men whose appetite will grow by what it feeds on. It will henceforth be his fault if an 'effective demand' does not arise for what he has to offer.

## ALL TEACHERS ENGAGED IN MAKING MEN

It may seem to him that many of the world's teachers must live continually far away beyond the boundaries

of his territory, dealing with material which seems far removed from his specific task; but he must never let himself forget that even teachers of Geography, Latin and Mathematics are somewhere or other leaving their mark upon the minds and souls of those whom he also has to teach, and that they need and in the end will value his help and comradeship to ensure that that mark should somehow or other become one of 'the marks of Jesus.' In time, the Christian teacher himself, depending solely upon the spontaneous inspiration and power of the moral and religious ideal depicted in the New Testament—and incompletely but effectively in himself—will find that he is called naturally to a place of pre-eminent and central influence for his work's sake. Read the Bible, it has been said, as an ordinary book, and it will soon become for you the most extraordinary book in the world. Let the Christian teacher also enter honestly into the common fellowship of the other human teachers of child and youth around him, sharing in the common task of shaping thought and heart and will, helping them to grow into free men, then he too will find the highest honour and dignity freely given to him.

## 4

## TEACHING THE CHRISTIAN GOSPEL

A distinctive and decisive place among the world's teachers belongs by right to the Christian teacher, mainly because he brings in his hands the New Testament as a teaching instrument of incomparable worth—as far superior to any 'text-book of morality' as Jesus Christ Himself is superior to the conventional life of men. It is by handling the New Testament aright that the Christian teacher will find and keep his rightful place. It is as a teacher of the New Testament that he should be known first and last—by his effective use of its material for the fullest human education. He must not allow himself to think meanly or superficially of the meaning and range of his task. Teaching the New Testament well is the

most serious and arduous task to which the teacher ever set his hand.

It does not mean using the New Testament as a dumping ground for our own small ideals and motives—much less for our own theological beliefs and opinions or for our own fads and fancies. It does mean giving reliable information about the New Testament, about the contents and history of its books and about the background of the life from which they sprang. What we try to make the New Testament do educationally depends upon what the New Testament is. We must make it intelligible before we can make it interesting, and it must become interesting before it can become effective.

This study will attempt to do three things. It will seek to describe and appreciate (1) the Background of the New Testament ; (2) the New Testament as Literature and History ; and (3) the Religion and Theology of the New Testament. We must not underestimate the importance of this task, for it is the essential foundation upon which the higher aspects of teaching the New Testament must be built. In its main aspects it will come before us later on.

To a large extent, however, it represents only the work of scaffolding, which must not be confused with the real task of building, upon which the teacher is engaged. We must keep it in its proper place, and more particularly that part of it which deals with the geographical, political and social background of the New Testament. Enough of this kind of knowledge must be given to make the books intelligible, but maps and models, the details of habits and customs of Oriental lands, must not be allowed to monopolize the time and energy of teacher and pupil as they have sometimes been in danger of doing.

Teaching the New Testament itself means nothing less than teaching the essential content and message of the New Testament, or rather of the religious movement which created the New Testament. It means using the material which is peculiarly its own contribution to the life of the world in such a way and at such a time as to give the most effective impetus possible to the formation of character and to the making of personalities who have

a life to live and work to do in our modern world. Everything else is only preliminary to that.

The final task which the serious Christian teacher has to do is a much more delicate and strenuous task than merely transmitting information about the New Testament. He must grip securely the soul and power of the New Testament, while its soul and power must grip him organically, and through him become organically one with the life of men and the world.

### THE GOSPEL IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

To do his work adequately, therefore, the teacher must take pains to find out what is the soul and power of the New Testament. We have already considered some aspects of this question in relation to the unity of the New Testament and to the unity which must be behind all the teacher's instruction. What we are here specially concerned with, is its place in the task of teaching the New Testament. In its more general relations the question is fast becoming the central and critical problem in all discussions of Christian history, Christian Ethics and Christian thought. What is Christianity? What is its essence? What is its peculiar contribution to the life of the world? To use what is perhaps the most fitting phrase in this connection, and which we have already adopted for our purpose, what is the essential meaning and power of the Christian Gospel?

It is not easy to describe in explicit terms the situation created in this respect by the traditional theories of the infallibility of the written word of the Bible as an external authority. When Dean Burdon, from the University Pulpit at Oxford, not much more than half a century ago, could say of the Bible that "every book of it, every chapter of it, every verse of it, every syllable of it, every letter of it is the direct utterance of the Most High," it is evident that every part of the New Testament was as necessary to the Christian Gospel as every other part. In fact, the Gospel was literally the Bible.

## THE TRADITIONAL IDEA OF THE GOSPEL

On the other hand, nothing was more characteristic of the old Evangelicalism than the idea of what was called 'the simple Gospel'—always the same in form and substance for all men and for all times. Theoretically, at any rate, it stood in no vital relation to time and place. It was the business of the preacher simply to proclaim it to all and sundry, and it was sufficient for him to do so. This required no teaching in the proper sense at all, but simple proclamation and the exhortation to believe. This 'simple Gospel' was the stock-in-trade of the orthodox evangelist—a recipe for all the ills that flesh is heir to, and it was already made up for him into a dose in neat packets. It could be easily expressed in a series of apparently simple statements either of abstract truths or historical facts which comprised 'the plan of salvation.' This worked out in the end as the main points of a system of scholastic theology or, in the phraseology of a somewhat later time, of 'fundamental doctrines,' which was supposed to be the actual content of the New Testament and inseparably connected with the Virgin Birth, the Miracles, the atoning Death and the Resurrection.

It is difficult for us now to realize how these two views of the Gospel, as identical with the Bible as a whole and yet at the same time a consistent system of truths, could be held together in the same mind. Yet we can see that they both sprang from the same root, namely, from the idea of Revelation and inspiration as external and supernatural. God, it was believed, had spoken to men once and for all from outside. His Word enters into life as a new and independent element, side by side with but untouched by human capacities, changes and circumstances. That Word is the Bible.

## THE GOSPEL IN HISTORY

We have certainly travelled far since these views of the Gospel and the New Testament could be held. We have seen too clearly the heterogeneous elements which

have entered into the making of the New Testament—elements that are often inconsistent with each other and with the original teaching of Jesus. The only question now is as to how the Christian Gospel is related actually to the New Testament and in which direction we are to look for it. We may still speak of the 'simple Gospel,' but only in the sense that at the heart of the Christian movement there is a direct and inevitable appeal, so clear and so simple that to it every man can and must answer 'Yes' or 'No.' There has never been such a Gospel as could be picked up like a stone and flung at men haphazard in the hope that it would hit one of them. One of the great things we have learnt is that the New Testament does not give us the Gospel as an abstract truth, but always in concrete relations. We cannot find the Gospel anywhere except embedded in history, and in the concrete relations of life. We find it in history intertwined with a vast mass of traditional material of all kinds, including Oriental imagery and myths, pagan 'mysteries,' Greek philosophy and Roman Law—in Creeds, Sacraments and Church. We find it embedded in the life and experience that is behind the New Testament. It came to us first of all incarnate—wrapped up in an historical life and as a life. It was 'the Word made flesh' and not the bare abstract Word. It was lived out at a certain historical period under definite and temporary historical circumstances. Its history since then is a process of organic growth and life in and through the circumstances of each age. It is in Christian history as the life is in the tree. That life cannot be separated from the sap and the roots, the trunk and the branches; yet these take new forms and shapes with every new spring, while the life still lives and expresses itself through them in new ways.

## 5

## THE NATURE OF THE CHRISTIAN GOSPEL

We have already attempted to express the Gospel as the New Testament reveals it. It is the life 'in Christ,'

in Paul's phrase, expressed first of all in and through the personal life of Jesus under the definite conditions and meeting the definite needs of the first century in Palestine. It is subsequently expressed in the life of His disciples much more imperfectly, but still meeting and assimilating the circumstances, needs and problems of men in Antioch, Corinth and Rome. It is always the same life essentially, the Gospel of Christ and the religion of Jesus being only different forms and expressions of it.

### THE ORGANIC VIEW OF THE GOSPEL AND ITS EXPRESSIONS

If the modern study of the Bible has taught us anything, it ought to have taught us to elevate above all else the ethical and religious *content* of the Gospel which underlies all its expressions. Faith in Christ must mean primarily faith in what Jesus stands for, and what Jesus stands for we must surely find in His own personal life—in the spirit, attitude and character of Jesus, even more than in His verbal teaching.

### INTELLECTUAL STATEMENTS NECESSARY BUT INADEQUATE

It is, then, this organic view of the Gospel as the life 'in Christ,' embodied in varying historical forms, which is the peculiar contribution of the New Testament. The distinguishing marks and the intrinsic values of this life we can, no doubt, as in the case of the tree, describe in a general way, but we never succeed in reducing the description to quite universal terms or abstract statements, for we never find the life except in more or less temporary forms. There is always some element of limitation in the most general *statement* of its meaning and power. No expression exhausts its fulness, and every historical and intellectual expression of it includes something other than the thing itself. In accordance with the paradox of the spiritual life, this something more always means something less than the spiritual reality. The nearest we have come to expressing the Gospel in general statements is in such terms as the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man, but we cannot look even upon these as the Gospel which makes the New Testament what it is.

Abstract statements, however true and however Christian, do not make up the Christian Gospel.

More or less abstract statements we must, in the nature of the case, have, and they have their own place in education. It will again and again be necessary for the teacher to realize the Gospel as including certain definite intellectual principles or convictions, and as embodying definite moral qualities clearly related to each other. There is, however, probably no analysis of this kind which will at present command universal assent. One will interpret the Gospel mainly in religious terms of the Fatherhood of God and childlike trust in Him ; while another will start from the Brotherhood of man, and so emphasize the ethical call of the Gospel to the persistent, loving service of men ; while still another will prefer to express it in terms of constant and prompt obedience to conscience, and so emphasize the realization of the highest and fullest personal life. What is here emphasized is that the teacher must use these interpretations—and especially those of the New Testament—in order to lead his pupil deeper and deeper into the life and personality of Jesus Himself, as greater far than all attempts to interpret and to explain Him.

### THE PRINCIPLES AND SPIRIT OF JESUS

When, therefore, we speak of teaching the New Testament, we cannot mean by it simply the proclamation of certain moral and religious truths, however important. We cannot mean by it even teaching Jesus Christ in the sense of getting men to imitate the individual outer or inner life of Jesus. It must mean in the end to spread the life that was in Jesus in such a way as to make it organically one with all the manifestations of life in our day and express itself in all the circumstances and movements of our life. The historical and practical consequences of the Gospel are inevitable and involved in its existence, though they may vary from age to age. These consequences are at the same time both personal and social ; they are ethical and intellectual ; and the Christian Gospel is not taught effectively to any age until

these consequences are made plain and urgent to its mind and heart and will—to its conscience.

### METHODS AND AGENCIES, OLD AND NEW

For the teacher of the New Testament, therefore, there is no stopping-place until this whole task is accomplished. It is his duty and privilege not only to have the nature of this task clear in his mind and urgent upon his conscience, but to search for every method and agency which is capable of being used for the purpose. The Church already provides him with its traditional educational agencies in the pulpit and Sunday School. Both need to be transformed, however, in order to become efficient instruments of Christian education and instruction. The official Christian ministry and pulpit especially will have to take its teaching work much more seriously. We cannot avoid this by pleading our prophetic mission. The permanent influence of the prophetic *afflatus* and message itself can only be guaranteed by more systematic teaching. It can only be filled with meaning and power by its educational content and end. In fact, all the traditional institutions of the Church need overhauling from this educational point of view; while in order to meet the changes in outlook and in the nature and range of the Christian task, the Church must also go in search of new methods and new agencies through which its work can be more effectively done. It is true that the Church must use the New Testament more than it does for providing *itself* with the Christian instruction it so badly needs. It is, however, called also to the Christian education of the world at large.

For this purpose, we need agencies more definitely organized for the instruction of youth and maturity. It should be much more public in character through public lectures and free discussions quite different from the present more or less private meetings of the Church. There is need also for a more intellectual and clarifying type of instruction than the present 'edifying' methods provide. An order of public Christian teachers whose main business was to organize educational agencies of this kind would be a great boon.

The task of the Christian teacher, therefore, so far as the New Testament is concerned, is threefold. He must transmit a knowledge of the New Testament—its background, literature, history, ethics, religion and theology. He must use this material in order to make clear and enforce the essential meaning and message of the New Testament, its peculiar contribution to the life of the world, the Christian Gospel and its power. He must finally use this Gospel and its power as an integral part of all the influences which all kinds of educators are bringing to bear upon the human young in particular, in order to grow ideal Christian personalities and a society of such personalities in the Kingdom of God.

All this implies and demands an efficient teaching ministry in many forms. The Christian teacher is as necessary to the Christian Gospel as the Gospel itself, and a clear idea of its nature and meaning are necessary to him. Nothing less than a consistent, persistent and insistent policy and campaign of Christian education will ever meet the need. To have the larger share in this task of Christianizing the world in practice—of putting the stamp of Jesus upon all its life in every department—is the privilege and responsibility of the teacher of the New Testament.

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PART II

TEACHING THE NEW TESTAMENT : ITS  
MAIN PROBLEMS

- VII. THE LIFE OF JESUS FOR CHILDHOOD.
- VIII. THE SYNOPTIC PRESENTATION OF CHRIST FOR ADOLESCENCE.
- IX. TEACHING THE PARABLES.
- X. THE PROBLEM OF THE MIRACLES.
- XI. THE BIRTH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS.
- XII. THE APOSTLE PAUL AND HIS LETTERS.
- XIII. THE JOHANNINE LITERATURE, THOUGHT AND LIFE.
- XIV. JESUS CHRIST AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE LIFE OF JESUS FOR CHILDHOOD

1. *Presentations of Christ in the New Testament.*—Christ in Christian Instruction—The Synoptic, Pauline and Johannine Types of Life and Thought—The Main Features of Each.
2. *The Synoptic Presentation in Instruction.*—Difficulties of the Gospels—The Gospels in Modern Instruction—Teaching of Infancy and Childhood in Relation to Adolescence.
3. *The Historical Life of Jesus.*—Presentation of Christ to Childhood—Must be Historical—Historical Value of the Gospels—The Use of Non-historical Material.
4. *Content of the Life of Jesus.*—Outline—Boyhood and Youth—Main Elements of the Public Ministry—Last Days and Death—The Story in the Gospels—Makes a Difficult Demand—Dramatic Elements—Educational Dangers—Aims and Methods of the Teacher—The Resurrection.
5. *Moral and Religious Appreciation.*—Love for Jesus and its Qualities—Moral, Intelligent and Reverent—Based on the Love of Jesus for Men—Main Features of His Life for Boyhood—Heroic, Adventurous and Joyous Love.

#### I

### PRESENTATIONS OF CHRIST IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

#### CHRIST IN CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTION

At this stage of our discussion it may reasonably be taken for granted that the central task of Christian education is to bring the growing personality more and more into vital union with the spirit and will of Jesus Christ, and to secure the thorough application of that 'life in Christ' in and to all the manifold relations of life—personal and social.

Correspondingly, the task of Christian instruction (which is only one aspect of education) is to present Jesus Christ in His life and teaching, His work and personality, in such a way and at such a time as to help effectively in bringing about that vital union with Christ and its personal and social application. It follows that the essential meaning of teaching the New Testament is to make effective use of its material for that definite, moral and religious purpose, and for every subordinate end that may be necessary for the purpose.

It is therefore evident that the spirit of Christ must not only animate the teaching throughout, but also that the central place must be assigned to the actual presentation of Jesus Christ Himself.

### THE THREE MAIN TYPES OF THOUGHT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

That, of course, must be supremely true of the New Testament part of Christian instruction, for it might well be said that the New Testament is nothing else but a series of presentations of Christ. There are in it almost as many presentations of Christ as there are writers. They may be conveniently divided, however, into three main types, namely, the Synoptic, the Pauline and the Johannine. These represent the three main forms in which the Christian Gospel was presented in the formative period of Christian history. Naturally, these three are not independent of one another, but reveal a definite development of Christian experience and thought in contact with a different environment. They may roughly be distinguished from one another by saying that the Synoptic Gospels present Jesus as the Messiah ; that Paul presents Him as the redeeming Son of God ; while the Fourth Gospel presents Him as the revealing Logos or Word of God.

In their different ways, all three look upon Him as in some sense divine. In the Synoptics, His divine dignity comes to Him partly at His birth, but mainly at His baptism ; in Paul, His divine powers (in some way not quite clear) are in a state of suspense during His life on

earth, but become active in a new way through the Cross and Resurrection ; while in John the earthly life is only another mode of His full divine existence.

To a greater or less degree, all three are theological constructions based upon and issuing from the historical life and death of Jesus of Nazareth, combined with a definite appreciation of His moral and religious value.

### THE MAIN FEATURES OF EACH TYPE

These three elements of historical life, religious appreciation and theological construction, are mixed in very different proportions and co-ordinated in very different ways in the three presentations. In the Synoptics, the history is by far the most significant factor, and it is what stamps the whole. The appreciation is mainly one of the moral value of the teaching of Jesus, while the theological element makes itself felt mainly in a definite apologetic tendency which is only loosely combined with the life and death.

The Pauline presentation, on the other hand, is marked by the predominance of the theological point of view. This is so closely interwoven with the religious appreciation that it is often a very difficult task to separate the two, and sometimes it is quite impossible. With the exception of the death, the historical life almost disappears from the presentation, though there are many signs that it is always in the background, and that it was one of the main factors in the origin of both the religious appreciation and the theological construction.

The presentation of Christ in the Johannine literature is, at the same time, a further development of Pauline ideas and an attempt to combine the Pauline conception with the Synoptic type. The Johannine presentation thus becomes a theology or a philosophy put into the form of a life of Christ. Here the historical element, the religious appreciation and the theological construction are almost inextricably mixed up together in such an intimate way that it seems a hopeless task to try to keep them apart or to express them separately.

It will be agreed that in dealing with the main

problems raised by the use of the New Testament in modern Education, we must deal first with the Synoptic presentation as the earliest and the simplest as well as the most historical of the three main types of life and thought in the New Testament. We must try to see what is its place and value in our moral and religious instruction —what elements in it are available for our main purpose, and when they can be used with most effect.

## 2

### THE SYNOPTIC PRESENTATION IN INSTRUCTION

It is evident that the full presentation, even of the simplest of the Synoptic Gospels, cannot be adequately appreciated before childhood's days are well over. It is quite possible and even probable that most of the material of the first three Gospels was derived from the catechetical instruction of the Early Church ; but if so, it was certainly not the instruction of children. It must have been that of growing youths and adults.

### DIFFICULTIES OF THE GOSPELS

That naturally does not mean that there are no elements in Mark, Matthew and Luke eminently suitable for the instruction of children of all ages. What it *does* mean is that the material they provide must often be taken out of its context, and must always be specially adapted for use during the earlier periods of life. The Synoptic presentation as a whole belongs peculiarly to the adolescent stage. There are also other difficulties in the way of using the Synoptic material in its actual Biblical form for the purpose of introducing Jesus Christ to the younger children. For instance, there are three Synoptic Gospels, and the question must immediately arise as to whether we should make one the basis, and gather the material of the others around it for the purposes of instruction, or use a kind of amalgam of all three,

as is often suggested. Both methods, however, involve some adaptation of the Synoptic presentation under the influence of a more or less subjective point of view.

Further, it is plain that there are moral, religious and theological conceptions in each of the Gospels which are definitely above the comprehension of any child of nine or ten. Such are the ideas of Messiah, the Son of Man, Son of God, as well as many of the conceptions of the Sermon on the Mount.

Moreover, the kind of appreciation of Jesus that we find in the Synoptic Gospels is not always such as we can desire to perpetuate in our permanent valuation of Him. Only too often they seem to describe Him in terms of supernatural and miraculous power. It is implied that some of His deeds are displays of sheer divine power. It is true that this element is not usually a part of the deed itself ; it is often easily separable from the substance of the incident narrated. The act itself is generally capable of interpretation under other categories than mere power. In any case, we cannot wish to allow an impression of Jesus as a prodigy of mere power to become the primary element in our appreciation of Him upon the mind of child or youth. There are indeed plenty of signs that Jesus Himself desired to avoid anything of the kind.

On the other hand, on the face of the Synoptic narratives, the appreciation of Jesus in terms of His personal character and personal religion appears to be of only secondary interest to the writers. They certainly supply us with plenty of material for reconstructing the main features of His personal religion, but often we have to do so out of elusive suggestions and incidental references. Any permanent interpretation of Christ will of necessity reverse this order of interest and scale of values. Our highest terms will be those of character and personality—with the stress upon personal religion and the moral will.

Finally, the Synoptic presentation sometimes consists of narratives which certainly in their present form do not belong to the historical life of Jesus, but are rather symbols of the Synoptic faith in Christ and the creations of that faith. As we shall see, modern religious instruction may be able to make very good use both of the moral content

as well as the form of these legendary stories, but it is not often that they can in their Biblical form become part of our presentation of Jesus itself. Their place and value and the method of using them in Biblical instruction, must be more fully discussed later.

#### NO MERE REPRODUCTION OF THE GOSPELS POSSIBLE

All this means that our presentation of Christ can never be anything like a literal reproduction of the Synoptic construction. We must be satisfied at first with something less, and always with something different in its motive and purpose. In fact, we must dig below the surface for the richest veins of gold underneath, if we wish to use the Synoptic presentation of Christ effectively for the moral and spiritual ends of the Christian Gospel. Mark, Matthew and Luke provide us with an abundant wealth of material, and the most essential material for the purpose; but if we are to use it effectively in Christian instruction we must be free to select and adapt it, to a greater or less degree, to the needs and capacities of the varying stages of moral and religious growth.

In order to find out what to select and how to adapt, we must return for a moment to our psychological results. As we have seen, the material of the New Testament in its full sense, and especially its presentations of Christ, are the natural food of adolescence. All the teaching given to infants and children is from this point of view only preparatory, just to the degree that childhood itself is a preparation for adolescence.

#### CHILDHOOD IN RELATION TO ADOLESCENCE

There is, however, another sense—and one quite as real—in which it is true that each period of human growth represents not merely a stage on the way to a higher, but something complete in itself, different from and independent of the life of every other period. In this sense, infancy and childhood have each its own Gospel adequate for itself and corresponding to its need. That may be a Christian Gospel—as Christian in its spirit as

that of adolescence—but it is necessary to remember that it can never be the full Christian Gospel.

It may be said, therefore, that in our effort to present Christ, the adequacy of our instruction will depend upon our success in combining these two points of view, namely, that of infancy and childhood as preparatory stages on the way to adolescence and maturity, with that of the same periods as revealing their own independent life and needs which do not depend upon adolescence for their completion.

To combine successfully these two points of view in the working out of a scheme of instruction and education, is one of the supreme tasks of the Christian teacher. What may be offered here or elsewhere can only be very inadequate suggestions based upon very imperfect knowledge. Nevertheless, the attempt must be made again and again to solve the problem as one of the central difficulties of religious teaching.

### 3

## THE HISTORICAL LIFE OF JESUS

### PRESENTATION OF CHRIST TO CHILDHOOD

We do not come face to face with the real difficulties of the problem until we have to deal with the instruction of late childhood (between the ages of nine and twelve).

There is a fairly general agreement among modern educators that this is the fit and proper time for making the first attempt to give anything like a consistent and more or less systematic picture of Jesus, and that the attempt should be made towards the beginning rather than the end of this period.

Naturally, the child will have already been told a number of suitable Wonder-tales and other stories of which Jesus is in some sense the hero ; but so far they have been told only as individual stories complete in themselves. They have been told also not so much for the sake of giving a picture of Jesus as for the sake of some element of educational value in each story itself.

At about eight or nine years of age, however, the child is ready to appreciate to some degree a connected series of stories, and in an elementary way the picture of a growing personality as well as the meaning of history as distinguished from an independent 'once-upon-a-time' story. There is an opportunity of impressing upon the mind some simple, consistent and clear picture of Jesus, through His deeds and words, in His relations with God, man and the world around Him.

The questions of the special aim, general character, form and content of this first deliberate presentation of Christ are essentially educational questions, although some theological considerations are undoubtedly involved in any attempt to answer them. Educational principles and methods ought to be the decisive factors, and, fortunately, substantial agreement is to be found among those best qualified to form an opinion with regard to the main points.

#### MUST BE ESSENTIALLY HISTORICAL

In the first place, the presentation of Christ for childhood should, without any doubt, be essentially historical. This is not meant in the sense that every item of it must be guaranteed as literal fact by historical criticism, but in the sense that it must provide the picture of a life actually lived out under definite historical circumstances of time and place. It must not be left hanging in the air, as it were, out of effective touch with the earth. Without overdoing the local colouring and the more trifling peculiarities of the time, it ought to be the picture of an individual Jew of Galilee in the first century. The universal elements themselves, which are so evident in the life of Jesus, demand this individual background in order to reveal their meaning and power. That is one of the great advantages of the biographical approach to history and religion, and we must make the most of it at this stage. The adaptability of the Synoptic presentation for this very purpose is also the very reason why it is to be preferred to the Pauline and the Johannine presentations for purposes of instruction.

## THE HISTORICAL VALUE OF THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

This, of course, raises the whole question of the historical value of the Synoptic Gospels. If the teacher were ever led to believe that no such person as Jesus ever lived, it would make the task of teaching the New Testament a very different thing. Whatever might be the effect of such a conclusion upon the value of the Christian religion, it would certainly reduce the value of the New Testament as an educational instrument, especially for this period of life, to a much lower level. The Synoptic material would then have to be relegated to a later period to keep company with the Johannine Gospel. Instead of the life of Jesus at this time, we should have to be satisfied with a life of Paul—material much more difficult to handle and of far less value for this age—as the first personal bearer of the spiritual and moral values of early Christianity.

It does not, however, appear that the Christian teacher will ever be called upon to face the need for such a radical revolution in connection with teaching the New Testament and the Christian religion. This radical attack upon the fundamental historical character of the Synoptic Gospels has far less prospect of success to-day than ever, though it will probably always remain as one of the many questions which ought to have some discussion as part of the general problem of the relation between Christianity and History.

It may now be taken for granted that the Synoptic Gospels do provide us with sufficient reliable material to construct a historical picture of Jesus in the main features of His character, deeds and words. Once that is granted, difficulties with regard to particular incidents and sayings can be overcome. To most modern teachers, passages here and there may appear to be unhistorical. It is scarcely to be expected that there will ever be absolute agreement in detail with regard to what can and what cannot be included in a strictly historical life of Jesus. Every teacher must, in the end, fix his own limits, and the only rule that can be laid down is that naturally no

honest teacher will repeat as history what he does not believe to be history.

This, however, does not mean that he cannot use even legendary incidents—and that for historical purposes—in his narrative of the life of Jesus. Such incidents, when properly introduced by some non-committal formula, may, indeed, have a useful part to play in what is intended to be an historical presentation of Christ.

### THE USE OF NON-HISTORICAL MATERIAL

Another element also which cannot be called strictly historical must always enter into any attempt to picture Jesus as a whole. The Synoptic Gospels after all only provide us with a somewhat uncertain chronological framework, into which are inserted a number of incidents and sayings which vary in each Gospel, and are differently arranged in each. The whole of the early life up to the baptism is practically a blank, while the geographical, political, social and religious background of the particular incidents, as well as of the story as a whole, is only barely indicated.

Some of this background must, in any case, be supplied in order to make the life and sayings of Jesus intelligible, and it can only be supplied by the constructive exercise of the well-informed historical imagination. To convey the impression of Jesus as a historical person, some attempt must be made to describe the home at Nazareth, His education, His work as a carpenter, the growth of His mind, etc.—all the elements necessary to make His first public appearance natural and intelligible. Of all these things we have no direct historical records—only hints and suggestions. They must always remain imaginative constructions, based on our general historical information.

When, therefore, we speak of a historical life, it is not meant that every item of it must consist of undoubted facts of history in the strict and narrow sense. Our nucleus of history must be eked out, on the one hand, by the introduction of stories and incidents which may be of doubtful authenticity. These are historical only in

the sense that they were actually told of Jesus at a very early time, and perhaps even during His lifetime. They will naturally be told as such, and they will be told because they help in some way to make the picture of Jesus clearer by revealing the sort of impression He made upon His disciples and contemporaries. They are true to Him even though they may not be true of Him.

On the other hand, the gaps in our historical material must, somehow, be filled by imaginative constructions—true to the record of history, and based upon what we know from other sources about the time, the land and the people of Jesus.

What is primarily intended, then, is that we should make a deliberate attempt to describe the real life of a real person among real men in real circumstances.

## 4

### THE CONTENT OF THE LIFE OF JESUS

#### OUTLINES OF THE LIFE OF JESUS

The framework of the narrative is already laid down for us in the Gospels, and it follows quite simply the childhood and youth, the public ministry in all its aspects, the trial, death and resurrection. The discussion in detail of most of the educational problems connected with the treatment of the material content of the narrative will be found in other chapters. We shall here deal mainly with the more definitely historical aspects of the life.

1. *Introduction.*—Though Mark's historical record begins with the Baptism, and the Gospels of Matthew and Luke bring us no certain direct information about the birth and childhood of Jesus, yet we cannot do without some kind of introduction. Such an introduction might proceed on one or all of three lines.

We might start with some features of modern life that are familiar to the children—Churches, the seasons of Christmas and Easter, the meaning of the Christian era—all leading us back to Jesus and creating an interest in Him.

Secondly, we might describe the people of the Jews and their original country—still starting from modern times and going back to Jesus and Palestine.

Finally, the third line of approach might be through the birth-narratives. They would be given as stories told about Jesus with a view to deepening the impression already made, that He must have been a marvellous person. The teacher would not raise the question of their truth at all unless it be definitely put to him. If the question is asked, he must take the responsibility of explaining the position as he sees it, insisting upon the value of the stories (whether 'true' or not) as showing how great Jesus must have been to make people tell and believe such stories of Him.

For this purpose, the Birth-stories can be told in very much their Biblical form.

### BOYHOOD AND YOUTH

Following this should come some account of the childhood and youth of Jesus, though of Him as an individual we only know that He lived in Nazareth, and that probably He was a carpenter by trade like His father Joseph. It is, however, still possible to reconstruct enough of the external life of a Galilean boy of that time, His home life, His education and probable journey to Jerusalem, to serve as a background and preparation for the later experiences. From the Gospels themselves also, by reading between the lines, we can infer a good deal with regard to what must have been happening in the inner life of Jesus during His youth. Many of His parables are mirrors of His personal and early experiences, as well as of the Gospel He wished to enforce.

Out of these elements a plausible and probable picture of the childhood and youth of Jesus may without much difficulty be reconstructed. The purpose of such a picture is to make the children feel that they are hearing of the real life of a real man, to give a concrete background to the public life, to prepare for it and to provide the appropriate atmosphere. Essentially it will be an expansion of the brief description of the Gospels: "Then

He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was always obedient to them ; but His mother carefully treasured up all these incidents in her memory. And as Jesus grew older He gained in both wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man " (Luke ii. 51, 52).

### MAIN ELEMENTS OF THE PUBLIC MINISTRY

*2. Public Ministry.*—In the public ministry we come for the first time to the personal history, and the task of the teacher is to use the material of the Gospels to give as vivid and as clear a picture as possible of Jesus struggling and fighting for great spiritual ideals and values. There ought not to be very much need for the teacher to talk in any formal way of these spiritual values of which Jesus was the bearer. The values are in the history itself, and will make their own power felt. What the teacher has to do is to find the most effective arrangement and grouping of the facts in order to give an interesting presentation of them to children of this age. Here *some preparatory scenes* will come first : John the Baptist, the Baptism of Jesus, the Temptation, the first public appearance at Nazareth and the calling of the disciples. The emphasis is mainly upon the relation of Jesus to God, His consciousness of Sonship, His sense of a divine mission.

Then will come most naturally the *early ministry in Galilee*, wherein Jesus appears as the Helper and Healer of men in body and soul. This part of the narrative will consist of a selection of the stories of healing, some of the parables and other incidents which can be brought into appropriate relation with them.

It is the time when " the common people heard Him gladly," and when the controversies with the Pharisees had not yet arisen. The climax of the narrative of the ministry is only reached by attempting to show Jesus on one side fighting strenuously with the Pharisees for His ideals, and on the other devoting Himself to explaining them to His own disciples. He appears as the *Prophet* and the *Teacher*, and it is here undoubtedly that the main stress of the life of Jesus must always come. Education-

ally, as we shall see when we come to deal with adolescence, the controversy with the Pharisees is the most valuable element in the Gospels ; but at this age we cannot do very much to make the difference between the ideals of Jesus and those of the Pharisees clear, yet some attempt should even here be made to narrate the main facts in such a way as to reveal some of their significance in this respect.

### THE PROPHET AND THE TEACHER

In this section, therefore, should be grouped well-chosen examples of the controversial incidents and parables as well as examples of the positive side of the same struggle to maintain the higher ideals in the intimate talks of Jesus with His disciples. These latter find their centre in the conversation at Cæsarea Philippi and the Transfiguration. All this represents only one method of grouping the incidents of the Gospels, and it attempts to combine a topical and chronological arrangement. Several other suggestions, equally justifiable, might be made, but in any case only a few examples of each type of incident and teaching can be given.

3. *The Last Days, Death and Resurrection.*—In this section of the narrative the main incidents will be the journey to Jerusalem, the Entry, Cleansing the Temple, the Passover and the Last Supper, the Betrayal by Judas, the scene in Gethsemane, the Trial, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. It is easy to enumerate them, but not so easy to deal in any satisfactory way with the many educational problems they present (*e.g.* the problems of presenting the Messiahship of Jesus, the character of Judas, how to give any intelligible account of the attitude of the Jewish leaders and authorities, and how generally to present to children the story of the Trial, Death and Resurrection without doing more harm than good). One can only make a few suggestions with regard to the treatment of some of them.

### FEATURES OF THE STORY IN THE GOSPELS

The story of the last days and death of Jesus is told in the Gospels with extraordinary restraint, simplicity and

dignity. The narrative as a whole represents the highest and noblest literary achievement of the Early Church. There is nothing else in the New Testament to compare with its power to move the heart and will, for it is the most effective portrayal of the most effective fact in the history of the world. It is so especially for those who can refrain from mixing up their own rigid system of theology with the story of the Gospels ; who have some power of reading between the lines, and have some understanding of the circumstances and of the thoughts and ideals of the actors in the drama. These facts will not have much need of the teacher. He will simply have to see that they approach the narratives in the proper attitude and look at them from the right point of view. It is true that here as elsewhere there are many literary and historical problems, and that it is a subordinate part of the teacher's work to meet them sometime in some way. In the older classes, occasion must be found to deal with them frankly, and to interpret even the legendary elements in relation to the meaning of the Cross for the Early Church. Dealing with the literary or historical difficulties, however, is of little importance compared with the main problem, which is a purely educational one.

#### MAKES A DIFFICULT DEMAND UPON THE TEACHER

In one sense it may well be said that in teaching these last lessons we are face to face with the fundamental and final task of all religious instruction. When we have thoroughly learnt and taught the meaning and power of the Cross and the Risen Life, it might legitimately be said that the Christian lesson has come to its natural end. It is often the case, however, that we fail to teach that final lesson thoroughly, either because we try to teach it too early, or because we do not prepare the way for it carefully enough. Both arise from the fact that in our teaching we do not follow closely enough the matter and method of the Gospels in dealing with these final scenes in the story of Jesus. Their way is to bring before us historical narratives of concrete incidents, leaving them to make their own impressions on the mind. We are so

accustomed to our own dogmatic interpretations that we do not in our teaching trust the method of the Gospels, but are always tempted to read them in the light of the Pauline Epistles. This does not mean that the method of the Epistles has no place in religious instruction, but only that it has no place when we are in the region of the Gospels, which is the life of Jesus. It is true that there is a dogmatic element in all the Gospels, but what is truer still is that it is practically absent when the writers are dealing with the trial and death of Jesus. That is a true educational instinct, and if we are to follow it, our lessons must consist of an attempt to bring our pupils directly under the influence of the facts themselves, and to let the facts speak for themselves to the human heart. The Gospels themselves make it very plain what this will mean, for they give the story of the Cross as the climax of the life of Jesus and of the hard-fought struggle between Him and His enemies. With every incident as it comes, the convictions of Jesus with regard to God and His Kingdom are more and more sharply contrasted with those of the people around Him. The real character of the opposing forces is more and more clearly revealed. The time for compromise is past, and both sides pursue their purpose to the bitter end. There is no evading a final decision between them.

#### DRAMATIC ELEMENTS IN THE STORY

If Jesus in utter faithfulness to His faith goes forward undismayed to take upon Himself the final consequences of that faith, His enemies also become utterly reckless in the pursuit of their purpose, and never falter in their campaign of hate. Such is the dramatic impression which these last scenes made upon the minds of the early disciples. To transmit that impression faithfully is the central task of the teacher.

The Gospels, it is true, show us that the facts have to some extent been edited, but the editing has always taken what we may call a psychological direction. That is to say, the Early Church so moulded the narrative as to bring out more dramatically still the contest between

fundamentally different ideals ; and in their hands the various actors have become almost universal types of the different attitudes involved in such a contest. They have thus made Jesus, the religious leaders, Judas, Pilate, Peter and the others stand out before us as great typical figures in the universal struggle for and against God and His kingdom. They do not seem to have done any injustice to the facts in this way, for they have only brought out more clearly the meaning which was inherent in them. The redemptive power is in the history, if only the mind and the heart can be brought directly and humbly face to face with it.

#### EDUCATIONAL DANGERS

Narrating the life of Jesus for childhood, the first task of the teacher is to consider how much of this historical and psychological meaning can be effectively brought home to the child. The concrete and dramatic story of the Cross and its external incidents are such as will be easily followed with interest and intelligence by them. It is not so easy to give the right impression of the motives and inner experiences involved. It is difficult, especially, to do anything like justice to the enemies of Jesus. There is nothing in the experience of the children which can help them to understand why the Jews should put a man like Jesus to death. Their actions will seem to be utterly without sense or reason. That is one of the dangers of telling the story of the Cross too early. Some attempt must already have been made to explain in some simple fashion the contrast between the popular, national and military ideas of the Messiah with the peaceful and spiritual conception of Jesus Himself with regard to the Kingdom of God. This will help the children to understand how Jesus came to be condemned for blasphemy ; and though they will not be able to follow the deeper motives of the leaders, the tragedy may become to some extent intelligible to them.

#### METHOD AND AIMS OF THE TEACHER

The method to be adopted by the teacher also requires a great deal of consideration. He must either tell the

story or read it from the Gospels, or a selection from them. The difficulty about telling the story freely in this instance is, that the composition of the story in such a way as to reproduce the spirit, atmosphere and impression of the Gospel narrative is a very difficult and dangerous task. It is not only that its composition by the teacher means a great deal of careful thinking, for that could be overcome here as elsewhere. The great danger is that our narrative should become sentimental instead of representing the strong, moving pathos of the scene. On the other hand, the difficulty about reading the story in the Gospels is that we need a picture which can only be painted by fusing together elements from them all, and there is a danger of destroying the best impression by passing to and fro from one to another. But whether he decides on telling the story of the Cross or reading it, there are some points which the teacher must bear in mind throughout.

(a) His great aim should be to bring the children face to face with Jesus as He goes to His death, and to let nothing stand between the story itself and the heart of the child. Let him stand for once directly under the influence of the human tragedy and triumph of the scenes themselves as elements in human history, freed from all theological dogma, and especially without the intrusion of the dogmatic temper.

(b) In particular, we need to be warned against letting the figure of 'the Lamb of God,' passively suffering His doom, have too much control over the description. Let the heroic, majestic side of the innocence of Jesus be emphasized.

(c) So far as possible also, it should become clear how the attitude and words of Jesus bring before us the whole meaning of His life and Gospel. Even now it is the filial trust towards God and the brotherly service of others that mark Him and His words. 'Father' is still His name for God, and it is of others that He thinks and not of Himself. This may, after all, be the best way of saving the children from a mere ignorant and unreasoning hate of the enemies of Jesus. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

## EDUCATIONAL PROBLEM OF THE RESURRECTION

The story of the Resurrection presents a very different problem, which is dealt with elsewhere. So far as their religious and educational value is concerned, these narratives belong essentially to the life and experience not of Jesus but of the disciples. Whatever view we take of their historical character, they are a picture of the faith of the disciples and a record of their religious experiences. As the Birth-stories form the introduction, so the Resurrection-stories form the conclusion of the Life of Jesus—both of them primarily pictures of the tremendous significance of the Personality of Jesus for His disciples. Their proper educational place is as an instrument for impressing the supreme value of the personality and character of Jesus upon the mind, and the impossibility of thinking that death could destroy Him. The first and main task of the teacher is through them to create and strengthen the convictions that Jesus cannot fail to carry through His ideals and purposes, that God rules even through death, that Jesus offers a permanent spiritual communion with Himself to His disciples and that eternal life is in that communion. Before and after death He is the same in character, in purpose, in love and in power. Whatever there is in these narratives which can help the teacher to make these convictions real and living, it is His business to use for that purpose. Some of these narratives He will not be able to use at all; some He will use as Wonder-stories in early childhood; and some He will use here and elsewhere in trying to make the moral and religious experience—the inner history of the disciples between Calvary and Pentecost—real and clear to His pupils.

## 5

## MORAL AND RELIGIOUS APPRECIATION

So far, we have been dealing mainly with the historical elements of our presentation of Christ for childhood. Naturally, we are not teaching the life of Jesus for the

sake of the merely external dead facts of history without any appreciation of their moral, spiritual and intellectual value. We must try to let the facts reveal the spiritual values of which Jesus was historically the bearer, but we need to be reminded that we cannot expect at this period a full and adequate appreciation of these values. There must, therefore, always be some subjective element in every teacher's attempt to teach the life of Jesus. That cannot be avoided and should be frankly recognized. Any and every presentation of Christ implies to some extent even the particular theological interpretation of the teacher Himself. We should, however, honestly try to let the facts speak for themselves ; we should try to distinguish between the moral and religious appreciation which is essential and the theological construction that may follow *for us* ; and we should in any case try to make clear to ourselves the main spiritual values which we wish deliberately to associate with Jesus in the minds of the children.

### LOVE FOR JESUS AND ITS QUALITIES

All will agree that the first aim of the Christian teacher must be to awaken love for Jesus and trust in Him and what He represents in so far as a child of nine or ten is capable of such an attitude. When, however, we speak of love for Jesus, we must remember that if it is to be a moral factor—strong and healthy—and not merely a cheap and enervating sentiment, it must be an intelligent love. That means to say, it must be generated by and it must grow with an increasing knowledge of Jesus. To love Jesus means to know Him. It is a moral appreciation of Him, of what He is and what He represents to some degree or other.

It must also be a reverent love. That means to say, to love Jesus is to love One who stands far above us in word and deed, in character and spirit. To love Him means to feel His power, to bow to His authority, to obey the call of His love. Underneath and behind our love for Jesus there must therefore be a realization of His love for men to make it intelligent ; and to make it reverent

there must be some realization of the authority and power of His love to the uttermost in the Cross.

### BASED ON THE LOVE OF JESUS

Naturally, it is only a small part of this end that we can hope to achieve through our first presentation of Christ to childhood. On the other hand, we must remember that we are now laying down the main conditions upon which our ultimate success will largely depend. That reveals at once the kind of picture we must try to give. It must be one which will discover, though only in an elementary way, the main spiritual values which became focused in the life and death of Jesus—and especially the reality and utter generosity of His love. It is necessary and inevitable that many different pictures of Jesus should be drawn by different hands. One may seek chiefly to reveal His beauty, while another enshrines His truth and another still His righteousness; but they must all, to be true at all, reveal the sovereignty of His redeeming love—the sovereignty and the reality of it in His spirit, character, deeds and words. His beauty, truth and righteousness are closely woven into the pattern of His love.

This, then, is the supreme and first condition of any and every effective presentation of the Christ. This also, combined with the moral needs, capacities and interests of childhood, will suggest the other characteristics of the child's life of Christ that we need.

### MORAL FEATURES OF THE BOY'S LIFE OF JESUS

There can, indeed, be little hesitation as to the dominant notes that should ring through the story of Jesus in the ear and soul of boyhood. They are heroism and courage, the spirit of adventure and the spirit of joy. When the highest love takes up the harp of life, these are the chords it strikes. It is true that it is in adolescence that this love will come to its own completely and decisively, but the heroic, adventurous and joyful elements that wait upon it to do its bidding must

be there to welcome it when it comes in its glory. It is the moral heroism of the faith of Jesus that needs most emphasis and illustration now, and there is a wealth of material in the Gospels for the purpose.

It ought also to be clear that our picture of Jesus for this period should be frankly and thoroughly human—full of genuine human experiences, of struggle, temptation and growth, of doubt and perplexity as well as exultation and triumph, representing the ebb and flow of the spirit within the steadfast unity of gracious and holy purpose.

This, of course, by no means excludes the growth of a wider and deeper appreciation of Jesus later on as the bearer of divine values, nor of a fuller theological interpretation of His person and work. It is the necessary foundation and preparation for them, but we must now be satisfied with fostering in an elementary form some moral and religious interpretation corresponding to the needs, capacities and interests of childhood.

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## CHAPTER VIII

### THE SYNOPTIC PRESENTATION OF CHRIST FOR ADOLESCENCE

1. *Adolescent Life and its Features.*—The Decisive Stage in Education—Adolescence and the New Testament.
2. *The Literary Study of the New Testament.*—The Books of the New Testament—The Need for Educational Editions—Three Aspects of the Gospels.
3. *The Character and Teaching of Jesus.*—Study of Jesus for Adolescence—Jesus as a Teacher—Jesus in Controversy—The Jewish Leaders—Contrasted with Jesus—The Moral and Religious Experience of Jesus and its Fundamental Features—Social Spirit and Activity of Jesus.
4. *Life and Thought of the Primitive Church.*—The Synoptic Presentation as a Whole—Relation to the Life of the Primitive Church—The Origin of the Church and Christian Theology.
5. *The Synoptic Gospels and Modern Problems.*—Modern Valuation of the Synoptic Presentation—Its Relation to Living Issues.

### I

#### ADOLESCENT LIFE AND ITS FEATURES

##### ADOLESCENCE THE DECISIVE STAGE IN EDUCATION

IT has already been said in many forms that the culminating point in our moral and religious instruction and education is to be found in adolescence. Then comes normally the decisive experience, when the vision and the meaning of the spiritual world of which Jesus is the supreme revealer flash upon the soul of youth and may make or mar his destiny. This may come suddenly or gradually. We may call it 'conversion' or describe it by any other name equally unfitting and inadequate. In any case, its reality and gravity in some form, as a

natural and inevitable feature of healthy adolescence, is undoubted. It is a well-known point in any effective and successful educational process, and on a small scale is an essential factor in every process of learning. In Herbartian language, it is the culmination of the process of apperception. It is the point at which all the varied elements which have somehow found a place in the mind become fused into an illuminating unity, acquire living, transforming power and enter into control for the time being—in fact, become educationally effective.

‘Conversion’ is thus a critical stage—a crisis in education. Adolescence is its natural home among the periods of human growth, though it may sometimes be paralleled also in that transition-time between infancy and childhood which often anticipates on a smaller scale many of the features of adolescence. In many cases this experience might rightly be called religious conversion, even when the specific religious element is not central. It combines in itself three elements, namely, a sense of the inadequacy of past experience, an effort to look at all things from the new and more unified point of view and an element of reverence—of all which the religious sense of sin, the exercise of prayer and the act of worship are the crowning expression.

Adolescence, then, is the most critical period of human growth. It is the time of decision, the age of ideals and of the conflict of ideals, the stage of strenuous struggle for a higher unity—and at the same time it is the age of self-assertion and of a keen desire for wider communion in larger social groups and communities. It is the flowering time of love and the period when the sense of personal responsibility awakes.

#### ADOLESCENCE AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

Because it is all this, it is also the one great opportunity of the New Testament with its Gospel of love and ideals, of the value of the individual and of personal loyalty to Christ, of social service to men and loving trust in God the Father.

So far, we have only been able to prepare the way,

in infancy and in childhood, for the understanding of this Gospel in its full sense. Now comes the time for the presentation of its essential qualities and power, the time to make its urgent call ring clear in such a way as to demand a decision for or against it.

The whole material of the New Testament is, therefore, here in place—its living history and its classic literature, its supreme ideals and its highest motives, its ethics, its religion and its theology, its epoch-making personalities and the community of its saints, its Kingdom of God and its crucified, triumphant Saviour. More than all, here is the time when all these should be brought to bear decisively upon the living issues of the life of modern youth.

## 2

## THE LITERARY STUDY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

It is clear, therefore, that a mere literary and historical study of the New Testament will not suffice here. It is, however, a very necessary preparation for the deeper call of the New Testament. Youth is in search of reality, and of reliable knowledge too, and as critical of theories as he is of conventions. His study of the New Testament cannot be too critical in preparation for a keener, fuller and more positive appreciation of its personalities, movements, ideals and forces.

He will, first of all, study its books—the Gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke, the Book of Acts ; and then the Letters of Paul ; then Hebrews and the Johannine Literature ; and the rest when he finds the time.

## THE LITERATURE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

It is to be hoped, however, that he will be able to read them all sooner or later in some better and more attractive form than our ordinary editions of the Bible, and also with some more effective help than the conventional commentary. Most modern commentaries seem to have been expressly written for the age of senile decay and

not for living and growing youth. They plod on doggedly from dead phrase to dead idea, evading dexterously most of the difficulties of youth and explaining cumbrously all that is self-evident or obvious. For purposes of educative instruction they are mostly barren and useless, and they only interfere with the light that breaks from the soul behind the written page.

We are in urgent need of a series of educational editions of the books of the New Testament, with new and intelligible translations, which ought to make most of the conventional commentary needless. We need these as a substitute for the usual popular and Sunday-school editions which are only the bulkier commentaries in miniature. In the religious instruction of youth far too much time and energy are spent on details that do not matter, with the result that the weightier matters of the Gospel do not get the attention which is their due.

In this chapter we are only concerned with the study of the Synoptic Gospels, which must naturally accompany the Synoptic presentation of Christ for adolescence. The study of the Letters of Paul, his personality, his work and his presentation of Christ, and also that of the Johannine Literature and type of thought and life, will be discussed in later chapters.

There are three aspects of the study of the Synoptic Gospels which ought to form part of the Biblical instruction during the periods of early and middle adolescence :

### THREE ASPECTS OF THE GOSPELS

1. Each of the Gospels ought to be studied separately, but more especially Matthew and Luke, keeping in mind particularly their different aims and methods and the peculiarities of their several presentations of Christ. This should be rather a rapid reading and survey than a detailed exegesis. Several readings of the text from different points of view are better than a wearisome plodding through verse after verse.

2. There should be a Synoptic study of the three Gospels in order to examine the literary and historical relation between them, their common basis in Mark, the

use by Matthew and Luke of an early collection of the Sayings of Jesus, their different methods of selecting, arranging and dealing with their material as well as the different forms they give to the words of Jesus, all of which reveals the peculiar tendencies and interests of each. A course of lessons arranged definitely with these ends in view would prove an interesting variant of the ordinary Biblical instruction, and would provide at the same time a good introduction to the third study.

3. Finally, there should be a critical study of the character and history of the Synoptic Gospels—literary and historical—intended to describe more particularly the history of the material, from its source in oral tradition through early written collections to the present form of the Gospels ; also their general literary form and language in relation to the language and types of literature extant in their time, including the origin, history and purpose of such characteristic literary forms as parables, for instance.

### 3

## THE CHARACTER AND TEACHING OF JESUS

This study of books should lead to a more intimate and appreciative knowledge of the thought, life and personalities of the New Testament ; and the study of the Synoptic Gospels should be accompanied or followed by

1. An elementary but systematic study of the character and teaching of Jesus on the one hand, and on the other hand by

2. A fairly complete consideration of the Synoptic presentation of Christ as a whole.

### STUDY OF JESUS FOR ADOLESCENCE

Provision has already been made during childhood for dealing with the more or less external record of the Life of Jesus with some necessary indication of the growth of His experience and some examples of the characteristic content and methods of His teaching. Now towards the

end of early adolescence (13-16) come the need and opportunity for a fuller description and a deeper appreciation of the moral and religious meaning of the life, work and character of the Master. This comprises the urgent material of the New Testament—the material most likely, so far as both its content and form are concerned, to prepare the will for the great choice that is usually made during these years, and also to impel the will to make that choice.

Such a study ought to try to do three things :

(a) It ought to give some clear description of the main elements in the inner life and experience of Jesus—His sense of the near presence of the Father, His free obedience as Son, His intimate personal knowledge of God.

(b) It ought to describe and illustrate these as revealing and expressing themselves in His ' Messianic ' mission and His persistent and generous service of men to the uttermost sacrifice of the Cross.

(c) It ought to give a fairly full description of Jesus in His threefold teaching capacity—in His relation to His people in general, to the Pharisees and to His disciples.

### JESUS AS A TEACHER

For the purposes of this instruction, the dominant element in such a course of study should be the religious and ethical teaching of Jesus—but the teaching in close relation to the character and personality on the one hand and to the deeds and work of Jesus on the other. It is not an abstract discussion that is meant, but an attempt to give a living presentation of the historical Jesus, discovering and revealing the supreme values of the spiritual world in spirit, word and deed—the word being the clearest and most intelligible expression, interpreting both the deed and the spirit. We may, therefore, take the section on the teaching of Jesus as representative of the whole course.

No study of the Gospels in adolescence could be complete without an adequate study of Jesus as a Teacher in His methods and principles, including both the form and content of His teaching. The form of His teaching is

as significant as its content. His parables are so characteristic that we shall have to give them a separate discussion. But His teaching life in the open air, His free and genial intercourse with men of all kinds, His intimate communion with Nature and the use He made of it, His keen observation of men and things, His deep insight into ordinary human nature and His sympathy with the ordinary work and experiences of men, His respect for women and children, His intimate touch and preoccupation with individual men, His use of the Synagogue and His deep and intimate knowledge of the Old Testament—all these things are essential to the genius of Jesus, significant features of His teaching and its methods and a revelation of His whole spirit. They also form the best introduction to the content of His teaching for the people in general in His parables.

### JESUS IN CONTROVERSY

For educational purposes at this time, however, the most important element in the teaching of Jesus and the most valuable feature in the Gospels is represented by the controversy with the Pharisees and the other parties of the time, for in this conflict of ideals we have the old and the new side by side in concrete forms. They are presented in dramatic contrast again and again until the conflict finds its consummation in the Cross. For the effective presentation of an ideal, as for its history and preservation, the point at which it enters for the first time into a life-and-death struggle with its predecessor in control is the most dynamic and the most decisive. It is then that its moral value is most clearly revealed and is also considerably increased by becoming identified with the personality who is its bearer in the conflict. That is why the controversy with the Pharisees must be a central element in the moral instruction of the adolescent. It is, in effect, the most dramatic representation in all history of the central struggle of adolescence itself, namely, the struggle to grow out of the bondage of the law into the freedom of the spirit. It is the destined struggle of youth in every generation to burst the bonds of tradition and march into a fuller and more independent life.

It becomes one of the main tasks of the teacher, therefore, to attempt once more to use the material of the Gospels in order to make this struggle real, intelligible and urgent to the heart and mind and will of youth. Now it is not so much the external course of the controversy that he must bend all his intellectual and spiritual energies to depict, but its inner meaning, its moral significance, its strong contrast of two spiritual worlds, one lower and one higher, one a creed outworn, the other a newly born spirit of life. The condemnation and death of Jesus at the hands of the Jewish authorities do not represent the defeat of the new life but its conquest, which is marked by the 'power of His Resurrection.'

### THE JEWISH LEADERS

In order to bring out this meaning, the teacher will more than ever be called upon to make some effort to describe fairly and adequately the main features of the Pharisaic Ethic, Religion and Theology on the one hand, and on the other hand to make some analysis of the consciousness of Jesus.

He will now find plenty of guidance for both purposes in recent literature on the subject. He must, however, try to get rid of many of the traditional prejudices against the Pharisees, and do justice both to their defects and to their merits. There is no need to underestimate the value of their contribution to the life and thought of their people and the world in order to guard the superiority and infinite value of the spirit, attitude, life and principles of Jesus. After all, the Pharisees represented the cleanest, the most honest, the most earnest and conscientious element in the life of their time. Their spiritual pride, their narrow nationalism, their rigid orthodoxy, their casuistical calculations and their legalistic doctrines were the dark shadows cast by their real and deep sense of the absolute validity of the Law as God's will, by their consciousness that their people had an urgent message from God for the world at large, and by their intense desire to protect that message from the unholy touch of profane hands. Far better all their

earnest narrowness than the merely opportunist, worldly and indifferent breadth and shallow culture of the Sadducees. Far better their misguided retreat from the touch of the world—which was the dark shadow cast by their dependence upon God alone—than the mad, military and political ambitions of the Zealots with their faith in brute force.

### CONTRASTED WITH JESUS

Over against all these stands Jesus in direct opposition to the Sadducaic opportunist, to the Zealot nationalist, to the ascetic Essene, as well as to the exclusive Pharisee—refusing to become either a mere politician, a reckless revolutionary, a useless hermit or a plaster saint. The faith and hope and love which kept Him from dependence on the arm of flesh, delivered Him from the snares of political intrigue, gave Him courage also not to flee from the world's responsibility and work and saved Him from spiritual pride and self-righteous exclusiveness. There was really no choice for Jesus between the monastic Essene, with more 'holiness' than usefulness ; the Zealot nationalist, with more zeal than sense ; the aristocratic Sadducee, prouder of his lineage than of his loyalty either to his people or to his religion ; and the legal-minded Pharisee, fuller of theological lore than of practical love. Jesus was great enough to see the good in them all and perhaps to learn of them all—but also to repudiate them all. He had the courage to strike a way of His own. He was as wide in His outlook as the Sadducee, but with an infinitely greater love for His country and people. He was as uncompromising in His conviction and devotion to God's will as the Pharisee, but with an infinitely greater comprehension and wider tolerance. He was as much a man of the people as any Zealot, but with much more sanity and balance of mind and with an infinitely longer patience. He had as much faith in perfect purity as the Essene, but with an infinitely deeper insight into its moral quality and spiritual inwardness.

To explain and enforce these contrasts, the teacher for this age must do his utmost to penetrate into the innermost secrets of the soul and experience of Jesus.

He will, of course, never fully succeed, but he must not give up the attempt. He must resist the temptation to rest content with superficial phrases and with formal descriptions and titles. The freer, the less tied to traditional formulæ and methods he can be the better will he succeed in his purpose. Youth must feel that he is groping for realities even if it does not know whether he succeeds or fails. His constant failure indeed will be educationally more effective than a cheap success.

### THE MORAL AND SPIRITUAL SECRET OF JESUS

One of his main difficulties will be to interpret the Messiahship of Jesus in relation to the national and personal ideals of his age. He must try to show that Messiahship as a burden upon the soul of Jesus rather than an external dignity at which He snatched. He must show it, too, as the only contemporary form and category which His deeper moral and religious experience of Sonship could take—that and no more.

It is somewhere in that experience of Sonship that the last secret of Jesus lies. The other side of it is the Fatherhood of God. Its complement for Him was the Brotherhood of man. Love to God and man was therefore essential to its nature. Freedom and obedience were at one in it. All His virtues were the virtues of this filial and brotherly love. They are the truthfulness, the gentleness, the courage, the loyalty, the patience, the self-control, the wisdom, the justice, the sympathy of love. They really do not exist as virtues apart from the supremacy of love. The Kingship of God the Father is in this love, and it is to be finally incorporated in His Kingdom.

Out of all this also comes His imperative sense of vocation and of a divine mission of Saviourhood which finds only partial, temporary and inadequate expression in the title and office of the Messiah.

In all this experience are involved the great principles of the Gospel and teaching of Jesus—the doctrine of the Fatherhood, the Brotherhood of man, the value of the individual, the supremacy and universality of Love, the

moral and religious significance of the Kingdom in the universe, as well as the other convictions which make Jesus into the unique bearer of a whole new world of spiritual values.

It is along lines such as these that the teacher must search for the background, the meaning and the power of the contrast with the Pharisees which led through conflict to the consummation of the Cross.

### SOCIAL SPIRIT AND ACTIVITY OF JESUS

The other element in the teaching of Jesus which was mentioned, namely, His intimate teaching of the disciples, answers to that other prominent feature of adolescence which is represented by the group or social interest. With childhood the historical has ceased to be narrowly individual and biographical and becomes more and more social. The great men of adolescence are creators of communities, leaders and representatives of groups. Jesus must, therefore, be presented in that social atmosphere which belongs naturally to Him. Every aspect of the life and teaching of Jesus is full of it. His fundamental religious experience was that of being one of a spiritual family of God the Father with many brothers and sisters. The primary ethical expression of that experience was Love—the essentially social principle—finding wider and wider application every day in service and self-sacrifice for men. His teaching in the aspects already mentioned mirrors all this—in its love for the open-air life of nature and humanity, in His habitual use of the synagogue, in His fight with the Pharisees.

The one outstanding social activity of Jesus—using that word strictly in the sense of His activity in creating a new community—must be associated with His teaching of His group of disciples.

It is true that after His death the definitely social inspiration and impetus derived from Him led to the formation of the Christian Church. This represents the most significant social institution in the history of the world; and it must always form an important element in a full presentation of Christ.

Historically, however, during His lifetime, the community actually established by Jesus was not a Church but a School. His followers were not Churchmen but disciples, and it is that group-movement and the teaching associated with it which claims attention and needs emphasis in this study of Jesus for adolescence.

## 4

## LIFE AND THOUGHT OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH

Such a study as we have now suggested of the character and teaching of Jesus seems to represent the kind of moral and religious appreciation of His personality which is needed some time before adolescence is far advanced.

### THE SYNOPTIC PRESENTATION AS A WHOLE

To do full justice, however, to the Synoptic Gospels and their presentation of Christ, something more is needed than an exegetical, literary and historical study of the Gospels themselves, more even than a description of the historical person, work and teaching of Jesus. So far, what we have been doing is to make use of the material of the Gospels in order to describe the facts about Jesus and to express that moral and religious appreciation of Him which those facts themselves seem *to us* to imply and demand—not what they actually meant to the writers of the Gospels.

We saw that all the presentations of Christ in the New Testament include in varying proportions not only an historical element and a moral and religious appreciation, but also a theological construction. So far, this third element has found no definite place in our instruction. It is, nevertheless, essential to the Synoptic Gospels, though it may not take a very prominent place in their external structure. It is, after all, their theology that provides the categories into which both the historical acts and the religious appreciation are put. The theology

has also influenced the presentation at least both of facts and of their religious interpretation.

We must, therefore, find room for some account which will include the theology in and behind the Gospels in our instruction—especially since it represents one of the three main types of life and thought in the New Testament.

#### ITS RELATION TO THE LIFE AND EXPERIENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH

We have, then, to seek the most effective method of describing the Synoptic presentation of Christ as a whole in its meaning, relations and value, in its origin, history and influence.

This is not well done by abstracting anything like a theology of the Gospels from a concrete description of the life and experience of the early disciples. The Synoptic presentation of Christ was a living growth out of the experience of the Early Church, and was intimately connected with all the rest of its life. Undoubtedly, therefore, the proper method of approaching the task before us is to describe the life and experience of the Early Church as a living social movement with the Synoptic presentation as an essential element in it, and indeed as its greatest contribution to the history of Christianity. The Synoptic Gospels, like the Johannine Literature, are not merely the work of individual writers expressing individual points of view. They are the expression of a typical faith—and Matthew, Mark and Luke even in their peculiar characteristics represent wide circles in the Primitive Church and significant developments of its life.

Our Synoptic studies, therefore, while beginning in childhood with a description of the facts of the personal life of Jesus and continuing in early adolescence with the study of His moral and religious significance, must culminate in a religio-social study of the life, faith and theology of the early Christian community before adolescence has run its course. For this purpose the early chapters of Acts, as well as some elements in Paul's letters,

must be employed in addition to the material of the Synoptic Gospels.

### THE ORIGIN OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

This is not an easy study, for it implies an attempt to distinguish between the contribution of Jesus Himself in the Gospels and the influence of the Primitive Church upon the original facts and teaching. It would start with the relation of the disciples to Jesus during His lifetime and after His death. It would attempt to interpret the meaning and influence of the Resurrection, following upon the despair of the Crucifixion and leading up to the descent of the Holy Spirit. It would try to account for the origin of the Christian Church and describe its relation to Judaism and to the Law. It would try to show how the disciples were led to begin to theologize about Jesus, and to describe the main factors which decided the character, content and form of that theology —the influence of the personal life of Jesus, the problem of His death, the controversy with the Jews, the influence of the Old Testament and of Jewish conceptions. The Eschatology with its problems of the Messiah, Son of Man, Son of God, and of the Kingdom of God with the Parousia, would be an important chapter. Such special problems also as the rise of belief in the Virgin Birth and the identification of Jesus with the Suffering Servant would have to find a place as well as the causes which led to the origin of the first Christian literature.

More than all the personal religious faith and ethics of the early disciples and the Church, their practical, moral and religious motives would require attention.

The teacher would have to try to show the presentation of Christ which lies behind the Synoptic Gospels arising under and out of all these conditions and influences, and also show the different specific forms it takes in the separate Gospels—the historical emphasis of Mark, the anti-Pharisaism of Matthew, and the social and almost communistic tendencies of Luke.

## THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS AND MODERN PROBLEMS

Finally, while all this literary and historical teaching may be satisfactory so far as the New Testament itself is concerned, it certainly can never by itself do full justice to the moral and religious needs of youth. It has only revealed to him what once has been. History, however significant, is after all not religion, which belongs essentially to the living present. Youth needs, and must have, a faith capable of meeting the needs and problems of to-day and to-morrow. It is not enough to show him how the Christian faith met the needs of yesterday.

### MODERN VALUATION OF THE SYNOPTIC PRESENTATION

Our literary and historical study must, therefore, be accompanied at every step by a practical interpretation, a modern 'translation' and valuation of every item of our instruction. It is well to know the Gospels and the Synoptic presentation as one definite interpretation or valuation of Christ and the Gospel, expressed in terms of the first century ; but it does not really amount to moral and religious instruction. It cannot become a religious education without some attempt to show its permanent value for the task of constructing a modern presentation of Christ and the Gospel.

Such categories as Messiah, the Son of God, the Son of Man, the Kingdom of God, the Suffering Servant and others are, after all, Jewish terms. It is well to know their meaning for their time. This 'language of Canaan' must, however, be translated into modern English, and the permanent value of such terms must be made clear before they can become effective instruments of modern religious instruction and education.

### RELATION OF GOSPELS TO LIVING ISSUES

The emphasis upon the historical Jesus, the use of Old Testament prophecy, the stress upon signs and

wonders, the place of the Virgin Birth and the central significance of the Death and Resurrection in the Synoptic presentation, suggest and may give us some help to solve such modern problems as the relation between Christianity and History, the use and value of the Old Testament in religion, the relation between Science and Christianity, the meaning and value of life after death and immortality—all of them urgent and significant questions of religion in modern days.

Such problems as these must have a definite place in any complete modern religious instruction, and no teaching of the New Testament which does not continually keep them in mind, and which does not use the material of the New Testament as a help in their solution, can be satisfactory. Thus only can the New Testament fully justify its central place in modern Christian education.

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## CHAPTER IX

### TEACHING THE PARABLES

1. *The Nature of the Parables.*—The New Valuation of the Parables—The Parables in the Gospels—Their Authenticity—Their Characteristics—Parable and Allegory.
2. *The Purpose of the Parables.*—Mistaken Theory of the Evangelists—The Influence of the Theory—Summary.
3. *The Educational Value and Use of the Parables.*—Their Educative Value—Progressive Use of the Parables—For Small Children—In the Life of Jesus—In Early Adolescence.
4. *Teaching the Parables in Practice.*—How to Teach the Parables—The Art of Telling the Stories—The Practical Application of the Parables

#### I

### THE NATURE OF THE PARABLES

#### THE NEW VALUATION OF THE PARABLES

No one will deny that modern Biblical Criticism has rendered a very signal service to religion by rescuing the Prophets of the Old Testament from the obscurity into which they had been cast and showing their fundamental importance in the history of Israel and of Christianity. It is no less certain that Christian life and thought must also acknowledge a somewhat similar debt to recent New Testament scholars for delivering the parables of Jesus out of the hands of arbitrary methods of interpretation and making them available for the purposes of Biblical and religious education. So arbitrary were those methods that it had become an axiom that the parables were not to be used as a primary source of Christian teaching, but only as very subordinate helps for the purpose of illustration.

Even *Trench* takes it for granted that they form only "the outer ornamental fringe, but not the main texture"<sup>1</sup> where the teaching of Jesus is concerned. By this time, however, we have reached a stage when it is felt that not only are the parables the most characteristic part of the teaching of Jesus, but the most reliable evidence for the main features of that teaching as soon as a scientific method of interpreting them is adopted. The recent studies of Jülicher, Bugge, Weinel and Fiebig combined have now placed the parables in their own proper position, and for the first time have made it possible to use them effectively in the work of religious instruction. Instead of being looked upon as riddles and elaborate allegories meant to 'half-conceal' the truth, most of them at least are seen to be transparent explanations of some of the most important truths of the Gospel, mirrors in which some of the most fundamental features of the inner personal life of Jesus can most plainly be seen. Their general meaning and purpose have now been made plainer than ever before in the history of the Christian Church; and it has become one of the urgent tasks of the Christian teacher to make more systematic use of the parables for Christian instruction in the light of this modern study. To do that he must first of all get a fairly clear idea of the results of this recent study with regard to the purpose and place of the parabolic element in the teaching of Jesus; and also of the methods by which the parables can be taught.

It is evident that one of the deepest impressions made upon the minds of His hearers by the teaching of Jesus was that it was very different from that of the Scribes, and that this impression was connected with His use of parables. The first meaning of this difference, of course, is to be found not in the mere form or method of the teaching, but in the freshness and independence of its content. His was not an elaborate exegesis of texts, nor was it an array of traditional authorities, but an outpouring of the contents of His own soul in a limpid stream. The Hebrew *Maschal* in all its variety of proverb, paradox, metaphor, simile, fable, riddle and allegory was

<sup>1</sup> *Notes on the Parables*, p. 39 (1858).

probably more or less familiar to the people as part of both the Old Testament and the Rabbinic teaching of school and synagogue. What Jesus did was not to invent unheard-of methods of teaching, but to choose the most popular and effective of the old. These, however, he made new by filling them with the freshness of His own personality. It is quite possible that He may even have borrowed now and then something more than the general forms of His teaching from the Rabbis ; but if so, what He borrowed certainly became a new thing in His hands. There are some Rabbinic sayings and parables that bear a very close resemblance to some sections of the Gospels. In real meaning and spirit, however, they are as different as the moral message of Jesus is from the legalism of Judaism.

### THE PARABLES IN THE GOSPELS

What we have now to do, however, is not to trace the origin and history of the parabolic method, but to study the parables of Jesus as subject-matter for Christian instruction.

According to the Synoptic Gospels the teaching of Jesus was not only exclusively moral instruction, but it was also almost entirely occasional, popular and pictorial in form. He spoke always not in abstract but in concrete terms—in vivid imagery of all kinds. Many times we are told generally that Jesus spoke in parables, and most of the examples given of His teaching are in parabolic form. Three passages are called 'parables' in all three Gospels—Matthew, Mark and Luke. Two more are so called in Matthew and Mark ; one more in Mark alone ; three in Matthew alone ; and eleven in Luke alone. There are therefore twenty sections in the Synoptic Gospels which are definitely referred to as parables. There are also six other passages more or less directly referred to under the same name. But it is quite evident that no importance is to be attached to the occurrence of the name itself, for there are many other passages in the Gospels so similar in form and character to the above-mentioned that it is impossible to separate them. One writer on the parables

includes as many as seventy-nine sections of the Gospels under that name, and the number varies in different writers from that figure down to thirty.

### AUTHENTICITY OF THE PARABLES

It is now generally agreed that this parabolic material as a whole is the most authentic element in the Gospels. The parables generally, that is to say, come in substance from Jesus Himself, and they represent the most characteristic side both of the form and method of His teaching.

The only important qualifications made by modern scholars to that statement are the two following :

(a) It must be granted that the Evangelists in recording many of the parables do not give them in exactly their original form—the form which Jesus gave to them. Generally the changes made are not of any importance. In some cases, however, it is held that the meaning has become obscure just because the Evangelists have not been faithful enough in their record of the words of Jesus. Some, indeed, insist that in two or three cases the whole meaning of the parable has been changed.

(b) This last opinion, that two or three of the parables have been more or less mutilated by the Evangelists, is connected with the fact that many modern critics believe that the interpretation given to some of the parables in the Gospels is not authentic. It does not represent the thought of Jesus. This is the case, it is said, especially with regard to the Parables of the Sower and of the Tares. The Evangelists have a mistaken idea that the parables are allegories in which every detail has a spiritual meaning. Jesus, on the other hand, it is held, only intended to teach one supreme truth through each parable as a whole. Other modern critics, while granting that the writers of the Gospels may have exaggerated the allegorical element in the parables, yet believe that Jesus Himself did now and then use the form of *Allegory*. They therefore say that the allegorical character of such parables as those of the Sower, the Tares and the Wicked Husbandmen is not due to the Evangelists, but to Jesus Himself. This point is of importance, as we shall see later on, in so far as it

affects the general purpose of the parables. Omitting, however, for the moment all consideration of the three parables just mentioned, let us see what is the particular nature of the others that we find in the Gospels.

It would seem that the only elements essential to a parable in the sense of the Gospels are, in the first place, a thought or truth that needs expression or explanation, and then the illustration or expression of that truth by means of a comparison. The comparison, however, may and does take several forms, and we find the word used by the Evangelists to cover a variety of comparisons, extending from a proverb like "Physician, heal thyself," to an allegory like that of the Wicked Husbandmen in Mark xii.

#### NATURE OF THE PARABLES

(a) The simplest form is that which may be called the *Similitude*, in which a resemblance is pointed out between some general fact in nature or in ordinary life and a moral or religious truth. A good example of this kind of parable is the saying about God and Mammon. "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." There are at least twenty-eight parables in this form of similitudes in the Gospels.

(b) The comparison may, in the second place, take the form of a complete incident, real or imaginary, taken from ordinary life. Here something that is done by a certain person in definite circumstances is used to illustrate or enforce a moral truth. The best known example of this kind of parable is the narrative of the Prodigal Son, in which the attitude of God to man is illustrated and enforced by a comparison with the attitude of a loving father to his son under certain definite circumstances. In form and character these narratives are of exactly the same kind as those we know as *Æsop's Fables*, but the word 'fable' has become so identified with stories of animals speaking that we cannot use it of these narratives of Jesus. Professor Jülicher therefore suggests that the word 'parable' should be used of them in a restricted

sense, and considers that there are twenty-one parables of this kind in the Gospels.

(c) There is still another type of parable in the Gospels which has been called that of the *Illustrative Instance*. In these the moral truth is enforced and illustrated by giving a typical narrative of its application in practical life. At least four of the parables of Jesus are of this kind, namely, those of the Good Samaritan, the Pharisee and the Publican, the Rich Fool and the Rich Man and Lazarus.

(d) Finally, as has already been mentioned, there are three other parables so called, which cannot be classed either as Similitudes or Parables in the narrow sense (that is, Fables) or Illustrative Instances. These are the Parables of the Sower, of the Tares and of the Wicked Husbandmen. They differ from the others not only in the fact that every detail of them has a meaning and place in the message of each parable, but that they have also become the subject of much controversy as to how far they are to be attributed to Jesus in their present form. The subject raises the whole question of the interpretation of the parables in general. Their value for Christian instruction depends very largely upon that.

## 2

## THE PURPOSE OF THE PARABLES

Why did Jesus speak in parables? How did He wish them to be interpreted? So far, it has been implied that His purpose was simply to explain and enforce His teaching through them in a popular way, and that He expected their meaning and point to be immediately understood. At first sight that seems self-evident.

### PURPOSE OF THE PARABLES

It is only natural to suppose that Jesus in putting His teaching into these concrete images is simply following the methods of all popular teachers, and is trying to make the truth He has to proclaim more easy to understand

than it would be in abstract forms. On general grounds, the purpose of the parables would need no discussion. Everybody would take it for granted that Jesus by this means wished to come into closer touch with His hearers. Unfortunately, however, the matter cannot be disposed of so easily. The Gospels themselves create the difficulty by saying that there is a totally different motive at the back of the parables of Jesus. In one passage at least they describe the Master Himself as explaining the general purpose of His use of parables, and the explanation is a very strange one. He is represented as saying that His object is not to reveal the truth but to hide it. In different forms this passage is found in all three Gospels, but it is borrowed by Matthew and Luke from Mark. In the latter it runs as follows, according to Dr. Moffatt's translation :

" And when He was alone, His associates and the Twelve questioned Him about the parables. Then said He to them, ' To you is the secret of God's reign given, but to those outside everything is imparted by way of parables ; that they may see and see, yet not perceive, and hear and hear, yet not understand, lest haply they should turn again and be forgiven.' "

There does not seem to be much possibility of mistaking the meaning of these words. They declare quite plainly two things :

1. First of all, they say that Jesus has two kinds of teaching, one of which is called ' the secret of God's reign ' and the other ' parables.' The former is given to the circle of disciples, the latter to the crowd outside.

2. Secondly, they declare that the purpose of the parables is to give the crowds something for eyes and ears but nothing that can enter mind and will. This is a means of hiding the truth from them—to prevent their repenting.

We may try to soften the harshness of this interpretation, as the other Evangelists have tried to do, but we cannot get rid of it. Mark is here attributing to Jesus a view of the parables that makes them the means of concealing the truth.

The question is, Can this theory be adopted in view

of everything else that we know about Jesus and the parables? It is universally agreed that we cannot, and that for several reasons.

### MISTAKEN THEORY OF THE EVANGELISTS

In the first place, even the Evangelists themselves do not adhere to it. It has had some effect, it is true, upon the form they give to some of the parables, but now and then they represent Jesus as using expressions which contradict the theory. For instance, in introducing one parable, He says : "Hear Me all of you and understand," taking it for granted that He can make the truth plain to them by means of a parable (Mark vii. 14). He is also surprised when they do not understand.

In the second place, many of the parables themselves contradict the theory. So far from hiding the truth from the people are they, that no better instances can be given of a truth made absolutely plain. Who could miss the message of the Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son and the Hidden Treasure?

In the third place, such a theory is contradicted by the whole character of Jesus as described by the Evangelists. He saw in 'teaching,' 'preaching,' 'seeking the lost,' the mission of His life, and He was not the one to mock the helplessness of the crowd. It is impossible to think of Him as speaking in parables with the object of *not* being understood.

We are forced to say either that the Evangelists have seriously misreported the words of Jesus on this matter, or that they are putting their own later and mistaken interpretation of the parables into the mouth of Jesus, and that He Himself never had occasion to discuss His purpose in using them. In any case, we can do nothing with this mistaken theory of the Evangelists, for it does serious injustice both to the parables themselves and to the character of Jesus. He certainly did not spend His time so largely in propounding riddles and weaving elaborate allegories. Such an idea could only arise after His death. The disciples had then to explain the fact that the Jews refused to accept Him as the Messiah,

and they fell back, in this as in other cases, upon the theory that they were 'predestined' not to understand. They gave the same explanation of His betrayal by Judas.

Once this mistaken interpretation has been cleared out of the way, however, we are left only with the natural explanation that Jesus used parables because He found that he could make His teaching plainer and more convincing through them. We gain nothing by trying, as many do, to combine some form of the theory of the Evangelists with this. To say that Jesus intended to half-conceal and half-reveal the truth in parables, is to say that He was at cross-purposes with Himself, without either saving the accuracy of the Evangelists or doing justice to the sublime simplicity of the majority of the parables.

#### INFLUENCE OF THE THEORY

But then, if it was the purpose of the parables to explain and enforce the thought of Jesus, why is it that some of them are so difficult of interpretation? The meaning of most of them is perfectly clear, and their point cannot well be missed. When that is not the case, there is always a definite reason for the apparent obscurity. It is a defect in their transmission. Some are given by the Evangelists only in a fragmentary form, and probably almost always in a more or less shortened form. The situation and context in which they were spoken were forgotten.

Sometimes, too, the theory of the Evangelists has affected the original form of the parable. It must be remembered also that the life to which Jesus appeals is not so familiar to us as it was to the people who listened to Jesus.

All our difficulties in interpreting the parables arise from these causes—difficulties that had no existence at the time they were spoken. As they came from the lips of the great Teacher, they formed the clearest and most convincing part of His teaching.

It is the business of the modern Christian teacher to revive in the minds of his pupils something of their fresh-

ness and of the impression they made upon those who first heard them.

### SUMMARY

In the preceding discussion, emphasis has been laid upon the following points with regard to the parables in the Synoptic Gospels :

1. That the parabolic teaching was the most characteristic element in the teaching of Jesus, and that it made a deep impression of freshness and originality upon His hearers. "The common people heard Him gladly."

2. That these parables are essentially concrete illustrations from ordinary life, used by Jesus in order to make His message more effective than it would otherwise be. They are not elaborate allegories in which every detail has a hidden meaning, but familiar similes and narratives which culminate in one special point. That point Jesus wishes to emphasize in order to express and confirm a moral truth or a moral duty.

3. That in the Gospels we generally get these parables themselves in substance very much in the form given to them by Jesus. Sometimes, however, we have only a summary. The circumstances in which they were spoken have not always been preserved for us in the Gospels. Sometimes also, owing to a mistaken theory held by the Evangelists with regard to the nature of the parables as intended to hide the truth from the people, an incorrect interpretation has been given in the Gospels. Even while they give us the parables themselves in their original form, they sometimes add their own comments, and these are not always consistent with the purpose of Jesus.

This last feature is really the main difficulty with which the teacher has to contend when he is using the parables in religious instruction. If the reports of the Gospels were not often fragmentary, and if they did not so often omit to state the exact circumstances in which each parable was spoken, the teacher would find his task a much easier one. His work is complicated by the need of supplying for the child what is missing in the Gospels.

These being the facts with regard to the parables and their transmission, it is clear that the general task of

the teacher in connection with them is to use them each and all in such a way as to reproduce something of the clear impression which they made upon the minds of the people who first listened to them. This cannot be done simply by reading a parable from the Gospels and making moral and religious comments upon each detail. That is the only method still commonly adopted, and it destroys the freshness of the parabolic teaching.

In order to prepare the way for making the most effective use of the parables in Christian instruction, it may, therefore, be useful to enter upon a somewhat detailed and educational discussion.

## 3

## THE EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF THE PARABLES

That the fundamental significance of the parables of Jesus is educational may easily be realized. They provide us, indeed, with the most direct educative material in the New Testament. They were created by the greatest of all Teachers expressly for the purpose of moral and religious education and instruction. That is largely why the great educators have returned again and again to the teaching methods of Jesus for inspiration and guidance. Here, if anywhere, the Christian teacher can learn how and what to teach. It might almost be said that the use we make of the parables in education is the best test of whether and how far the spirit of Jesus and the Christian Gospel has obtained a firm grip of our instruction.

## EDUCATIVE VALUE OF THE PARABLES

Moreover, their use by Jesus Himself will enable us to see just at what point in religious growth the parables are most likely to exercise their full weight of influence in education. Evidently they seemed to Jesus to provide the most likely means of effecting the transition from an external and objective stage of development to a more internal and subjective period—represented in His

historical circumstances by the transition from the morality of outward observance and Law to that of disposition, love and freedom. In a word, and using the terms of individual and educational psychology, we are at the end of childhood and the beginning of adolescence. And there is no doubt that every educational consideration points to the fact that it is here that the most fruitful teaching of the parables of Jesus—both as regards substance and method—is in its proper place. It does not follow that their material cannot be used at any other time, but it will only be for some subsidiary purpose and in some subsidiary way. Earlier than towards the end of childhood, we can only prepare the way for a full teaching of them, and that in a fragmentary manner. Later than early adolescence, we can only elaborate and systematize their teaching. Their full educative opportunity comes once and for all in late childhood or in early adolescence. It is then that their inherent power to influence the process of moral growth will tell decisively.

#### PROGRESSIVE USE OF THE PARABLES

Guided also by the literary, historical, ethical and religious significance of the parables as they are found in the Gospels, it will not be a difficult task for the teacher to decide when, in what form and for what purpose each parable should be used in instruction.

#### FOR SMALL CHILDREN

In the first place, some of the parables of Jesus are such consummate examples of the art of story-telling, illustrative of elementary moral virtues, that their use cannot well be avoided in the instruction of children even before they pass out of their infancy. At this time, of course, they would be used not as part of the deepest religious teaching of Jesus nor even definitely as parables in their original context. They would be used simply as independent narratives, valuable in and for themselves, forming part of a collection of interesting individual stories suitable for the instruction of children under eight

years of age. There are some of them that require practically no change at all in order to adapt them for this purpose. Their Biblical form is so complete in detail, so transparent, as to be easily intelligible as stories even to the smallest child. Such, for instance, are the stories of the Good Samaritan and of the Loving Father (which would be a better title for this purpose than the Prodigal Son). The former would be told simply as an instance of unselfish kindness by a stranger, and the latter as one of a father's generous love.

There are others that would require more elaboration of their detail in order to make them effective for small children. The teacher, however, need not hesitate about filling out their detail so long as he is faithful to their essential meaning, for it is very probable that Jesus Himself gave them originally in a much fuller form than the one we now find in the Gospels. In this way the story of the Shepherd and the Lost Sheep might be used as an illustration of care for animals and kindness to them. To this a companion story might be made out of the Parable of the Good Shepherd. This, of course, is not the main purpose of these parables, but it is quite in their spirit and in the spirit of Jesus, while it only requires an easy elaboration of their details to make them very effective for this end.

### IN THE LIFE OF JESUS

There is also another aspect of the parables which has not yet had the attention it deserves even in the scientific study of Jesus and the Gospels. They are not only the supreme examples of the art of teaching as practised by Him, but many of them have also a unique psychological value. They not only explain the truths He preached and enforce the demands He made, but they often also cast a welcome light backwards upon the history of His inner life and His personal experiences and interests. After all, every man spontaneously turns to that part of life and the world in which he is most interested and of which he has the fullest knowledge, for his aptest illustrations. It is, therefore, not without significance

that almost half the figures, illustrations and metaphors used by Jesus are taken direct from the common open-air life of nature around Him, and almost the other half from the details of the ordinary daily occupations of the men among whom He lived. There is scarcely an ordinary calling known to His time and country which He does not use in a spontaneous way in order to explain and enforce His Gospel. That at once stamps Him and reveals Him as a lover of Nature and of ordinary men—a soul rejoicing in the open air of the world's life, and a sympathetic sharer in men's ordinary experiences, with a human interest in their daily work and their children's play.

More than that, even, there is every reason to think that some of the parables have sprung directly out of particular moral experiences in the personal life of Jesus Himself, and in that sense are 'human documents' of supreme value.

#### IN LATE CHILDHOOD

It seems to follow that some of the parables must naturally find a place when sometime between the ages of nine and twelve we should try (as we have already seen) to give a picture of the personal life and activity of Jesus. In order to make His life real, we must include some pictures of Him as a teacher, and we cannot do better than give some concrete instances of how He taught the people in parables. Here and there in the sketch of His life—when He is described as teaching in the Synagogue, or walking with His disciples or conversing with individuals or preaching to the crowd—one or more of the parables might well be introduced into His conversation or address. The main object of this, of course, would be to give a real picture of Jesus Himself, and the parables chosen would therefore be those that cast some light backwards upon His own life or that can be most easily inserted into definite situations in the general narrative.

The Parable of the Treasure would fit admirably into the early days of the ministry, and find a background as well as an application in the life of Jesus and His disciples,

sacrificing home and friends for the sake of the Kingdom. The Parable of the Sower finds a natural background when Jesus sends out His disciples on their mission through Galilee, making them realize what He Himself had already realized in His own experience, namely, the variety of the results to be expected.

In the same way some of the other parables may be inserted at different points into the narrative of the life in such a way as to illustrate very vividly the experience through which Jesus and His disciples must have been passing at that very time. The teacher will find it an interesting work to seek for a suitable background in the life of Jesus for such parables as are simply grouped together without a context in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew.

#### IN EARLY ADOLESCENCE

So far, however, we have only been introducing the parables into the curriculum in a more or less subsidiary way. As we have seen, *the* great opportunity for any adequate teaching of the parables of Jesus in their full significance as expressing His fundamental principles and enforcing His most urgent moral demands, comes at the end of the period of late childhood or in early adolescence. At this time the children are developing very rapidly their powers of independent thought, and some elementary lessons on the parables will help to link the concrete narratives of childhood with the more definitely intellectual instruction that must begin with adolescence.

Two methods of dealing with the parabolic teaching are here in place. At about twelve or thirteen years of age a special series of lessons on the main parables, chosen for their particular ethical or religious significance, might be given. A good introduction for such a series would be a few lessons on the life of Jesus in the open air, His accurate observation and love of nature as well as His interest in the ordinary life and work of men. Then the general purpose of parables would be explained, and finally a selection of the simplest parables dealt with one by one. This selection would certainly include those of the

Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son, the Lost Sheep, the Pharisee and the Publican, the Servants entrusted with Money, the House built on the Rock, the Mustard Seed, the Treasure and the Pearl.

Finally, somewhat later in adolescence, an attempt must be made to deal, as we have seen, with the whole subject of the teaching of Jesus more systematically. Undoubtedly, the best introduction to such a sketch and the best summary of the teaching of Jesus will be found in a consideration of the parables.

Naturally it is not contended that all these suggestions for making use of the parables should be rigidly included in every curriculum. The discussion is only intended to reveal the many opportunities there are in modern education to make much fuller use of this material, and in a more effective way than has so far been made. The method of dealing with the parables wherever and whenever introduced needs careful consideration, and some discussion of that subject here will not be out of place.

## 4

### TEACHING THE PARABLES IN PRACTICE

#### How to TEACH THE PARABLES

It has already been said that the general task of the Christian teacher with regard to the parables is to use each one of them in such a way as to reproduce something of the fresh impression which it made upon the minds of the people who first listened to it. How, then, is the teacher to approach his task with that end in view? In the first place, he must study the record of each parable so that the one special point emphasized in the story may become perfectly clear to him. In most cases a careful reading of the story is enough to show what that is. In the story of the Hidden Treasure, for instance, the point evidently is the decision to give up every possession which the man has in order to gain the more valuable

treasure. In the story of the Prodigal Son it is the father's overflowing love, bent upon forgiveness in spite of all obstacles. The main point of the story of the Servants entrusted with Money by their master is that every possession implies a duty—the extent of the duty depending on the extent of the privilege. Of course, if the point itself of each story is not perfectly clear, it is useless trying to explain or enforce a moral truth or a moral duty through it.

### THE ART OF STORY-TELLING

The next step for the teacher will be to tell the story in such a way as to bring out the point in the telling itself. If he wishes to do any kind of justice to the method of Jesus he must cultivate the art of story-telling. He must try to make the story appeal as a whole directly to the imagination and reason of the class without any explanation. He must remember that he is dealing primarily with children who require a fuller and more picturesque narrative than is generally given in the Gospels. So in many cases he must be bold enough to use his imagination in filling out the details and making a complete story out of the outline in the Gospels—always taking care, of course, not to obscure the main point. The test of the good teacher is his power of expanding the brief form which he finds in the Gospels in such a way as to make the child realize the force of the main point without the need of explaining it to him in so many words.

The details of the story are not of any independent value. Their purpose is to make the whole story natural and interesting, serving always to make its point more convincing. The story of the Hidden Treasure, for instance, will not appeal to the child in the brief form given to it by the Evangelist. The labourer and his master to whom the field belongs must enter as actors on the scene ; the operations of ' selling all that he hath ' and of buying the field must be dramatically described ; while some definite idea of the value of the treasure and the

sacrifice involved in selling the goods must be given by describing the digging up of the treasure and enumerating some of the precious things the man must sell.

Filling up the outline by particular descriptions of this kind is the only way to produce the needed impression upon the child. Merely saying 'he sold all that he had' will not make him realize what is happening, but a short, vivid description of the sale of the furniture and the break-up of his home would make the situation real and the point effective.

Once the teacher has constructed a narrative of this kind and is able to tell it vividly he has laid the foundation for the moral truth or duty which he wishes to emphasize. As this man was ready and determined to give up the good things that he had for the sake of the better—so Jesus encourages the readiness of men to give up even what is good in the moral life for what is better, and the better for what is best, though it is not always easy to do so.

#### APPLYING THE PARABLES

What is then left for the teacher to do is to apply this truth or duty to concrete circumstances. This he can do in two ways. He can do so, in the first place, by finding such a situation in the life of Jesus as will show the parable in action. It will be noticed in Matt. xiii. 44-46 that the Parable of the Hidden Treasure is simply grouped with others. We are not told when, where and for what definite purpose it was spoken. We can, however, easily imagine a situation in which it might have been used with effect and concretely applied. No doubt Jesus was many times brought into close touch with some Galilean peasant who was deeply impressed and troubled by His teaching. The vision of a better life had been given to him, but he could not finally bring himself to make the sacrifice that was necessary in order to realize the new life as his own. There were serious difficulties in the way—perhaps ties of love or comradeship or home or possessions were keeping him bound to what he was. What better way of making

the message of this parable real than by showing it as part of the conversations of Jesus with such a man?

The second method of making the application of the parable real would be to give concrete instances of men and women in history who have given up the good things they loved for the sake of the better they had seen. Examples might be found even within the experience of the child himself when some valuable good thing must be sacrificed in order to attain something better.

In brief, therefore, an effective method of giving a lesson on this Parable of the Hidden Treasure would be as follows :

1. A brief description of Jesus giving up home and friends for the sake of His work, and of His disciples doing the same thing, would form an introduction.

2. Then a scene in which Jesus is teaching in one of the villages of Galilee would be described ; the effect upon some one definite person which Jesus notices ; his vision of a better life ; his perplexity and the difficulties in the way ; his coming to Jesus with his doubts and difficulties.

3. During the conversation Jesus tells him this story of the Hidden Treasure for the definite purpose of encouraging him to come to a decision to sacrifice the good things which he values for the sake of the better that Jesus has to offer.

4. Finally, one or two examples from history might be given of people who have faced and made the same choice, and the child could be shown that the same experience can come into his own life.

Such a scheme seems to provide an effective method of teaching most of the parables, whether they are given as part of the life of Jesus or in a series of independent lessons. It is only after they have been taught in this way that they can be read with profit and commented on in the Gospels themselves.

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## CHAPTER X

### THE PROBLEM OF THE MIRACLES

1. *The Miracles in Christian History and Life.*—The Modern Situation—The Educational Value of the Miracles—Their Relation to the Gospel—To Religious Growth—To Christian Tradition.
2. *The Miracles in Early Childhood.*—The Miraculous Narratives as Wonder-Stories—Essential Features of Educational Wonder-Stories—The Miraculous Narratives of the Gospels.
3. *The Acts of Healing.*—The Needs of Childhood—The Attitude of the Teacher—The Acts of Healing as Historical—Illustration of their Use.
4. *The Use of Legend.*—Legendary Narratives in the Gospels—Illustration of their Use—Story of the Daughter of Jairus.
5. *Miracles and the Christian Gospel.*—The Special Task of the Teacher—The Religious Significance of the Miracles—The Needs of Adolescence—How they can be Met.

#### I

### THE MIRACLES IN CHRISTIAN LIFE AND HISTORY

#### THE MODERN SITUATION

THE particular problem to be discussed in this chapter is that which concerns the value and place of the miraculous narratives of the Gospels in Biblical Instruction, especially as it faces the Christian teacher who accepts the verdict of modern literary and historical criticism upon these narratives. It is probable that he may still be able to look upon many of the strange acts of healing which are recorded of Jesus as actual facts. It is quite as probable that he has already been led to consider many other miraculous narratives, either as exaggerated reports of natural incidents or as the transformation of sayings

and parables into events or as the projection of psychological facts into the external world or as being due to the influence of Old Testament predictions and narratives. While he recognizes that Jesus did possess marvellous powers to which it is difficult to set a limit, he is at the same time convinced that the sun or the earth never stood still, that an ass never spoke human words and that a storm was never stilled by a word.

So he wants to know whether and how he is to go on telling these stories—not only of Jesus healing the sick, but also of Jesus walking on the sea, feeding the thousands and raising the dead, as well as stories of His miraculous birth and physical resurrection. He believes them to be legendary in character. His faith is quite independent of them. They are even a burden upon it rather than a help to it.

The first impulse of such a teacher is to throw such narratives on one side as worthless, not only for himself, but also for the children he is teaching. He has a feeling that if he uses them at all he becomes untruthful and something of a hypocrite. And when he can persuade himself to employ these narratives in his teaching, his constant temptation is to rationalize them—to reduce them in some crude fashion into natural events.

Such a result would certainly be a very serious calamity for moral and religious instruction. It only needs, however, some little consideration of this whole matter from an educational point of view to lead him to a very different conclusion. The question of the value and use of these miraculous narratives cannot thus be settled in a summary fashion and in bulk, nor is it settled simply by the theological or scientific views of adults upon the question of miracles.

#### EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF THE MIRACLES

If all the miraculous narratives of the Gospels were absolutely historical, it would not follow that they would be of any value for the purposes of religious education. On the other hand, if they were all absolutely unhistorical, they might still be of the utmost importance educationally.

At bottom the problem we are dealing with is not really theological but educational. Its solution depends not so much on the correctness of our theological or scientific views as on the educational value of the moral content of the narratives. In its turn the educational value of these stories depends partly on the general aim of our teaching, partly upon the laws and stages of religious growth, and partly upon the character and history of the stories themselves.

### RELATION TO THE GOSPEL

1. So far as the general aim of our teaching is concerned, every Christian teacher would agree that, by the time our pupils go out into the world, we ought to have transmitted the Christian Gospel to them in such a way as to make them realize it first of all, at any rate, as a moral force. Their readiness to obey it should not depend upon their belief or disbelief in the historical character of such a narrative as that of Jesus cursing the fig-tree or feeding the multitude with a few loaves and fishes. It follows that, whatever may be our methods of dealing with the miracles, our teaching should not in the end make the interest and the importance of the stories centre upon their miraculous elements, but upon any moral purpose or message they may contain.

The impression finally left upon the mind must be not that Jesus could work miracles, but that the Jesus of whom these stories could be told was such that out of His deep love for men He was ready to spend and be spent in their service. It is the moral and not the physical power of Jesus that belongs to the Gospel. The climax of the teaching must be to put the miracles in their proper relation to the Christian Gospel and to explain their past and present value for the Gospel. It is here in this last stage of our teaching that the difference in scientific and theological views comes fully into sight. It is here that the origin and value of the miraculous as a whole must be discussed.

2. Apart from our aim, we must also be led in this matter by the laws and stages of moral and religious

growth. The most evident fact here is that the first business of the teacher is to cultivate and guide the sense of wonder and the imagination of the child. To be effective, religious teaching must in some way make its contact with that region. The religious life springs from it, and must travel through it before it can take possession of the intellect and the will.

### RELATION TO RELIGIOUS GROWTH

It is also certain that in the earlier years of childhood the distinction which we draw between the probable and the improbable, even between the possible and the impossible, does not exist. There is no problem of miracles—at any rate so far as degrees of probability are concerned. Raising the dead and walking on the sea are as easy or as difficult to believe, as real and as true to the child, as healing the sick or any other event outside the child's ordinary experience. So far as the children are concerned, the problem is not whether the story we tell contains what may be called a miracle, but whether the miracle is of the right kind. Does it grip the imagination, and does it grip the imagination in the right way? Does it simply glut the imagination to idle satiety, or does it employ the imagination in order to reach the mind and the will? It probably ought to be added that the adult teacher must not be in too much of a hurry to impress his own unimaginative views with regard to the importance of historical accuracy and the improbability of the cruder miraculous narratives upon the mind of the child. The child lives in a world of make-believe for a longer time than is sometimes imagined. For him there is no reason why angels should not want food, why serpents and asses should not speak, why axes should not swim, and why prophets should not travel in whales. In his own due time he will shed that world naturally if only we will let him alone and give him a little help only when we have found that he is doing so.

Here, therefore, the views of the teacher as to miracles are simply out of court. If he cannot leave his views behind him, and enter into the credulous mind of childhood

for the time being, he should not attempt to teach children at all. Each miraculous narrative must be judged on its own merits, and whether we use it or not depends upon the character, the motive and effect of the miraculous deed. Its marvellous nature is a merit rather than a defect if its marvel is of the right kind.

#### RELATION TO CHRISTIAN TRADITION

3. Moreover, the Christian teacher cannot forget that the stories of miracles have always been part and parcel of the Christian tradition. It is not as if he had a choice whether to deal with them or disregard them. The latter he simply cannot do, for they are inextricably bound up with all the records we have of the life of Jesus which must always be the very centre of Christian teaching. This, indeed, suggests the most serious problem we have to deal with.

There is a point at which historical fact becomes necessary for the child, and when he begins to distinguish between imagination and history. It is then we are bound to give some sort of historical life of Jesus. The teacher may then be called upon to speak of legend as legend, and at the same time to protect the child from thinking that legends and lies are convertible terms. He must be able to use miraculous narratives from the Gospels because they are an essential element in the earliest Christian tradition, and yet at the same time he must remain true to his own convictions, and also stand guard over the continuity of the child's growth in passing from the world of imagination to the world of fact.

From this brief consideration of the characteristics and needs of childhood, the place of miraculous narratives in the earliest Christian tradition and the general aim of Christian teaching, three questions with regard to the miraculous narratives of the Bible emerge :

1. What is the independent educative value of the individual stories used as Wonder-tales in early childhood when the imagination must be gripped and employed by the teacher in order to reach the will ?

2. How is the teacher, who 'does not believe in

miracles,' to deal with the stories of miracle in the Gospels when in late childhood the historical life of Jesus must be told and the difference between facts and legends must be recognized ?

3. How can the whole question of the miraculous be discussed during adolescence in such a way as to make the origin and character of these narratives as legend and folk-poetry plain—in such a way also as to show their proper relation to the Christian Gospel as well as to preserve and emphasize all that is of real value in them ?

The educational problem of the miraculous narratives in each of these forms will be discussed in the following sections with the hope of indicating the main lines upon which the solution must be sought.

## 2

### THE MIRACLES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

#### MIRACULOUS NARRATIVES AS WONDER-TALES

In early childhood, as has been said, the critical and historical question with regard to the miraculous does not arise either for the teacher or the child. The strictly miraculous narratives will stand on exactly the same level as all other marvellous stories which are only outside the narrow experience of the child.

The question for the teacher is not whether a story describes a natural event or a miracle, but whether, as a whole, it is of such a character as to cultivate the imagination in the right way. It is by more or less miraculous narratives in the wide sense that this can best be done as a rule. It does not, however, follow that every story of 'miracle' in the Bible is suitable for the purpose. The teacher is in need of single Wonder-stories, complete in themselves, and each one must fulfil certain conditions, moral and educational, before he can use them with a good conscience at this period. He cannot, therefore, consider the miraculous narratives of the Bible in such a way as to accept or reject them *en bloc*.

He must rather look at each story independently in order to find out whether in spirit, content and form it is of such a character as to be available for his purposes. As a test for every tale that offers itself, he must have in his mind certain conditions upon the fulfilment of which alone a story can be admitted into the membership of the sacred circle of the pictorial images he must print upon the child's imagination.

#### ESSENTIAL FEATURES OF WONDER-STORIES

It will not be very difficult to set forth such conditions in a series of statements with the confident hope that the demands implied in them will at once appear reasonable to those who have given any attention to the needs of early childhood.

It is taken for granted, to start with, that every story chosen should be *told* freely to the children and not *read* either by them or by the teacher. Then, every good Wonder-story, whether Biblical or not, fit for use in moral and religious instruction should bear upon it the following marks :

1. The story must be of such a character as to appeal vividly to the imagination, or it must at least yield to imaginative treatment.

2. The story must not contain anything grossly superstitious, and must not, as a rule, call attention to any forms of wickedness or sin that are not already familiar to the child. At least it must be possible easily to eliminate such features if they are present without spoiling the story.

3. The mere marvel or miracle must not be the only or the main point of interest in the story.

4. Incidentally or otherwise, the story must be such as is capable of expressing a moral action. It must, that is, contain or lend itself easily to conveying something of positive moral value—a moral quality that stands in some actual relation to the child's life.

5. The story must be such as can be put into more or less of a psychological form. By this is meant that the action must be such as can be connected with the simpler

working of the mind. We must be able to make the child follow not only the external action, but also some of the more elementary thoughts and feelings of the actors in the drama. The purpose and the effect of the action must become more or less clear. Probably, therefore, God should not appear much as a direct actor on the stage. He must rather be the background and atmosphere of every tale—the hidden but real inspiration of the human drama. As God works in history, so we should give an impression of His working in instruction—mediated through the deeds of religious personalities.

If these conditions are fulfilled in a Wonder-story, then it might be said that the more marvellous and miraculous the narrative, the better it suits our purpose at this stage. That means to say that the greater or less degree of historical probability a story possesses is not a matter of much consequence compared with the fulfilment of the foregoing conditions.

#### MIRACULOUS NARRATIVES OF THE GOSPELS

The Christian teacher, therefore, must ask how many of the miraculous narratives of the Bible do actually or can easily be made to conform to this standard? As a matter of fact, probably few or none of them are quite suitable for children between six and eight years of age in exactly their present Biblical forms. On the other hand, there are many of them that can more or less easily be adapted for this purpose. The changes required will naturally vary with each story. Some, for instance, like the stories of the birth and childhood of Jesus, need only a few changes in form, setting and language in order to make them ideal Wonder-stories. As much as possible of the charm of the quaint language of the Bible should be retained, though something of it must inevitably be lost in the attempt to avoid words that need explanation in the case of children of this age. That will always be the case whenever we tell any Biblical stories in early childhood.

There are other stories, such as the 'Stilling of the Storm' and 'The Feeding of the Multitude,' which

require more radical changes before the above conditions are fulfilled. In spirit and general content they will suit our purpose well enough; but, as they are told in the Gospels, it is probable that they would miss their aim in the case of the children. There is a danger that the interest would become concentrated upon the mere miracle rather than upon the sympathy of Jesus and His goodness of heart. The moral quality cannot be impressed upon the mind by simply pointing it out at the end. It must be woven with the thread of the whole tale, so that the children may feel, even without being told, that Jesus loved to help men, or that Jesus was too good a man to be afraid of a storm, instead of merely thinking that Jesus could work miracles. Thus, in the story of the Storm at Sea, for instance, all the art of the story-teller would be employed in making an effective contrast between the deep peace of Jesus and the restless agony of the terror-stricken disciples. This, for young children at any rate, is not effectively done by the words 'He slept,' and 'Lord, help us, we perish,' which, of course, do the work thoroughly for adults who read the story. For children, it must be further and more fully illustrated by some description of the scenes on board that must have led up to these words.

There are, of course, other miraculous narratives in the Gospels which it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to adapt as Wonder-stories without destroying them altogether. Such, for instance, are the stories of the Resurrection and the Ascension, Cursing the Fig-tree, the Raising of Lazarus and many others. It may be possible to use them later on in another way, but here, at any rate, they seem to be out of the question.

Probably the result of a fuller consideration of the miraculous narratives of the Gospels would be the making of a good selection of them for use as Wonder-tales to be told in a fuller and more or less different form—not with a view to eliminating the miracle, but in order to make them conform to the conditions which have been mentioned. In such a selection would be included the Christmas Stories, the Stilling of the Storm, Walking on the Sea, Feeding the Multitude, Raising the Widow's Son, Healing

the Epileptic Boy and others. In each case it will be the work of the teacher to read the story over carefully and to ask himself whether and how each can be retold in such a form as to grip the imagination, while at the same time making the mere exercise of miraculous power subservient to any good moral purpose, and showing the movement of the minds of the characters as well as the external action.

All this, of course, means more work for the teacher, who will, however, find his reward in more effective teaching.

### 3

#### THE ACTS OF HEALING

So far the question of literary and historical criticism has not arisen in any acute form either for teacher or scholar. All the teaching takes the form of single stories, and the value of each miraculous narrative ought to be judged by its power to grip the imagination for moral and religious ends.

#### THE NEEDS OF CHILDHOOD

After the age of eight or nine, however, the teaching must become more connected. The material must be grouped and become more historical. It is here that connected life-stories of great personalities are in place, and the teacher is called upon to give narratives of the lives of Moses, David, Paul, and especially to teach the life of Jesus as a whole. In most of these biographies the question of miracles will have to be faced in some form or other, and for many reasons it becomes a rather difficult problem in dealing with the life of Jesus.

The question of the general form which the life of Jesus should take for children between the ages of nine and twelve or thirteen has already been discussed. At first, at any rate, it should be told by the teacher in narrative form and not simply read or studied with comments in any one of the Gospels. Its main object

should be to give the children a concrete and clear picture of the life, work and teaching of Jesus as a real human life lived among men. In doing this the critical problem of what is historical and what is not does not and ought not to arise in any definite form for the children. Of them the only thing that can in most cases be said is that they are beginning to realize in a general way the difference between actual facts and the product of the imagination. They may at any moment ask whether some individual incident is really 'true' or not, and they will not be ready to accept any kind of tale as actual fact without question.

For the teacher, on the other hand, the critical question does arise in an aggravated form when he is face to face with the task of giving the children some clear if elementary picture of what Jesus actually was and said and did. It is certainly not his business to discuss critical questions in teaching children, but quite as certainly he is bound to preserve his own intellectual integrity. He must not play fast and loose with the Biblical narratives, nor is he justified in simply forcing his own views upon the child, whether they are radical or conservative. His own views will and must, without doubt, influence the form of his narrative, but the value of his narrative in giving a picture of Jesus should not depend exclusively upon acceptance of his views.

The real problem, therefore, is how he can remain faithful to his own convictions and still not tyrannize over either the mind of the child or the Biblical stories. It is this problem which becomes urgent for the teacher in the case of the miracles of the Gospels. How is he going to deal with these narratives in telling the life of Jesus to children between nine and twelve years of age?

#### THE ATTITUDE OF THE TEACHER

The probability is that he has found no reason to change his conviction that many of the acts of healing recorded in the Gospels are historical facts—more especially the healing of nervous diseases and some of their physical results, such as blindness, deafness and sometimes lame-

ness, as well as probably some skin diseases that were at that time confused with real leprosy and called by that name. He will not be anxious to make the range of historical fact a narrow one, believing as he does in the unique nature of the personality of Jesus and realizing the extraordinary effect such a personality may well have had. At the same time, for many reasons, such stories as those of Raising the Dead, Walking on the Sea, Feeding the Thousands and others of a similar kind will almost inevitably have a legendary or only a parabolic character for him, though there may be some historical elements underlying them. This will be true also of the Birth narratives and of most of the Resurrection and Ascension stories in their present form, as well as of the accounts of the Temptation and the Transfiguration.

Now, the first thing such a teacher has to do is to recognize how closely the miraculous narratives are interwoven with the life, teaching and work of Jesus as described in the Gospels. Even if he desired to do so, it is impossible for him either to ignore or to eliminate them. He is not called upon to include them all in his narrative, but a representative selection of them must have a place in some form or other.

### MIRACLES OF HEALING

There will not be much difficulty about the miracles of healing. A number of these from the Gospel of Mark he can tell as integral parts of the historical life. He can thus describe the healing of the madman in the Synagogue (i. 22-27), Simon's mother-in-law (i. 29-31), the paralysed man (ii. 1-12), the deaf stammerer (vii. 31-37), the epileptic boy (ix. 14-29), blind Bartimæus (x. 46-52) and perhaps two or three others. For each he must find an appropriate setting, with a view to making them intelligible as real experiences for the people present, for the persons healed and for Jesus Himself. This setting will, as a rule, in outline at least, be found in the Gospels, but it does not matter much whether it is really historical or simply invented by the evangelist or by the teacher for the purpose. Naturally, no attempt should be made

to explain the cures in each case, and the common phrase 'possessed by demons' must be retained with an explanation that evil spirits were then supposed to bring the diseases. The main effort of the teacher should be given to describing the scene, the feelings and words of the actors and spectators in such a way as to make an impression of the extraordinary effect produced by the words, attitude, look and will—in fact, of the whole personality of Jesus upon other minds and wills.

It is probable that some legendary elements have crept even into these stories of healing, but they are insignificant, and in retelling the story the teacher can avoid them very easily without interfering with the meaning of the narrative.

In order to illustrate this method of dealing with the acts of healing as part of the life of Jesus, it may be well to give one example of its application as it has been worked out by Else and Otto Zurehellen.<sup>1</sup>

Let us suppose, then, that in giving a connected narrative of the life of Jesus we have reached the first day of His public activity in Capernaum. In Mark i. 21–34 there is a very brief summary of what happened on that day. The cure of the possessed man and of Simon's mother-in-law are narrated at some length. Others are only referred to, and we are told that "the people were greatly struck with the teaching of Jesus, for He was teaching them like One who had authority and not like the Rabbis." The business of the teacher is to reproduce as much as he can of this impression.

#### ILLUSTRATION OF THEIR USE

In order to do that for the children he must give a much more concrete picture of the scene than is given in Mark. He must tell the story in such a way as to make the children re-experience its events with some one who saw the whole thing. For that purpose the narrative must be given from the point of view of some one who saw and felt the effect. Let it be a labourer from one of the narrow streets of Capernaum. Give him and all the chief actors names. Follow him that Sabbath to

<sup>1</sup> *Wie erzählen wir den Kindern die Biblischen Geschichten?* (Mohr, 1906.)

the Synagogue. Describe the ordinary service there and an ordinary address by a Rabbi, as well as the feelings of our hearer. Jesus standing up to speak excites curiosity as a stranger. Give as His address some of the sayings of the Sermon on the Mount and one of His parables, making the contrast between it and the preceding address as clear and sharp as possible. Then describe the attitude and the natural comments of the congregation. The address is interrupted by the forced entrance of the possessed man who is well known. Describe him briefly, and the conversation between him and Jesus, giving their attitudes, looks, gestures vividly. Then comes the astonishing power of Jesus to calm him, the renewed surprise and excitement and the comments: "What a man!" "He has power over evil spirits!" "A miracle!" "Did you see how He looked like a king!" "Marvellous! I never saw anything like it!" "Just now the words and then the deed!" The service breaks up in the excitement of the cry: "A prophet! a prophet!" A vivid narrative built on some such lines as these will certainly help to make the life of Jesus real to the children even. It provides the only setting for the miracles of healing, for it is an attempt to reproduce what must have been behind the short summaries of the Gospels.

There will always remain differences of opinion as to exactly how many and which of these acts of healing can still be accepted and narrated as actual facts and as integral parts of the historical life of Jesus. Different teachers will probably draw the line at different places. In any case, each teacher can only give as actual history at this stage those incidents which he considers to be so.

## THE USE OF LEGEND

### LEGENDARY NARRATIVES

There is a second type of miraculous narrative in the Gospels, namely, that of which the raising of the widow's son and the feeding of the multitude are representative.

Some of these are now interpreted as exaggerations of actual incidents, some as due to the influence of Old Testament sayings, some as parables transformed into events, while the origin of others is obscure. In any case, for some reason or other, they are all considered more or less legendary in character.

It must be confessed at the outset that the teacher who holds this view is faced by a serious difficulty when he tries to tell the life-story of Jesus to children between the ages of nine and twelve or thirteen. It has already been pointed out that at an earlier time he can with a good conscience put his critical views behind his back and use many of these narratives as Wonder-stories, absolutely indifferent as to whether they are historical or not. At a later period, too, in adolescence he can discuss the whole question of the miraculous and legendary elements in the Gospels quite frankly with his scholars with profit, and with no danger to their reverence for Jesus and the New Testament. But in late childhood he can do neither the one thing nor the other. For the teacher himself, the critical question becomes urgent in an acute form. He must have some definite opinion as to the character of these narratives. On the other hand, he cannot discuss literary and historical questions critically with the children. Neither can he give to them as history that which seems to him to be either doubtful or definitely legendary. What, then, is he to do? He is not justified in simply disregarding such narratives. By so doing he would not only fail to reproduce the atmosphere of the Gospels, but he would also miss some of the best concrete illustrations of the teaching and character of Jesus. All attempts that have hitherto been made to construct a rationalistic life of Jesus in any living way have been failures.

There is also a good deal to be said for the view that these narratives should be so dealt with as to leave the way open later on either to show their legendary character or to defend them as historical. It would not be quite fair to shut the door finally upon either of these alternatives.

So far as one can see the best way out of the difficulty is that suggested and taken by Else and Otto Zurhellen

in their book on the Bible stories. They describe their method as illustrated by the story of the daughter of Jairus (which they regard as legendary) as follows :

#### ILLUSTRATION OF THEIR USE

" What, however, we recognize as legend we shall narrate also as such. The best method of doing so appears to us to be that we should give the legendary material as descriptions of the impression which the advent of the great personality makes upon men. As in the case of the parables, one must invent situations in which we can place such a legend so that at the same time the manner of its origin becomes plain. Take the following as an instance : In a Galilean village it becomes known that Jesus is coming to-day. The people gather together on the road which enters the village, and wait in groups for the famous prophet. The conversation naturally is about Him and His wonderful deeds. One tells of His healing a lame man in Capernaum. Another insists that there were two lame men whom He made whole at the same time.

" A third does not consider such acts of healing so very marvellous ; others had done the same thing, and even greater things. He is fiercely contradicted. One man who has been standing somewhat on one side notices the warm discussion going on, comes nearer and hears what they are talking about. ' Shall I tell you,' says he, ' what I heard a few days ago at Magdala ? ' He gets everybody's attention. Then he tells them the story of Jesus and the little daughter of Jairus (Mark v. 21-24, 35-43) amidst the running comments and exclamations of the bystanders in which their feelings, their sympathy, their expectation and their astonishment at Jesus find utterance. In the midst of the excitement caused by this story the cry is raised ' He is coming.' In front of this episode we would place the story of the man sick of the palsy (Mark ii. 1-12). After it might come the incident of the demand for a sign (Matt. xvi. 1-4). Other legendary narratives might be introduced in a similar way."<sup>1</sup>

Thus inserted here and there into the framework of

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 198 ff.

the life of Jesus, very effective use can undoubtedly be made of the more or less legendary narratives of the Gospels by the modern teacher. Telling them on these lines he can preserve his own intellectual integrity, and at the same time do justice to the child and the spirit of the Gospels. His narrative will also remain within the region of historical probability—for it is almost certain that such stories were told of Jesus even within His own lifetime. Moreover, such a method has the advantage of leaving the value and accuracy of such narratives a more or less open one for future discussion later on, while at the same time it suggests a natural origin for legendary additions to the life of Jesus.

All the stories of miracle cannot, however, be dealt with in this way—the story of the Gadarene swine, for instance, and the cursing of the fig-tree. Only those that are quite evidently consistent with the known character of Jesus, and either illustrate His teaching or some of His personal qualities, should be so employed. The others, such as the two mentioned, must be omitted altogether, either as inconsistent with our picture of Jesus or as being without moral value.

As good examples of stories which may be told with effect in this way one might mention the raising of the widow's son, the feeding of the multitude and the healing of the lepers. One or two even of those narrated in the Gospel of John might be used—the wedding feast at Cana and the raising of Lazarus, for instance—although it would probably be better to give these when studying the teaching of Jesus by itself later on in adolescence.

## 5

### MIRACLES AND THE CHRISTIAN GOSPEL

#### THE SPECIAL TASK OF THE TEACHER

The preceding sections have been devoted to a consideration of how and when the individual miraculous narratives of the Gospels can be used in a positive form

in the moral and religious teaching of the New Testament. When, however, they have been used separately in early childhood, and many of them have been included in different forms in teaching the Life of Christ in late childhood, we have not by any means finished with the question of the miraculous in relation to Biblical instruction. We have only indirectly prepared the way for distinguishing between historical and legendary elements in the Bible, and so made it easier for the mind to meet the criticism of the miraculous narratives which modern life will inevitably bring with it to every growing boy and girl—more and more so, indeed, as modern education becomes more effective and universal. More systematic and direct teaching on this question will be needed if the growing adolescent mind is to be put into a position to meet without unnecessary strain and danger both the popular and scientific criticism of the miracles of the Bible.

It is not the business of the teacher to eliminate the supernatural and the miraculous from the Bible and Christianity. It is rather to give his pupils a worthy conception of the miraculous and the supernatural—to fit their meaning into the modern view of the world—to distinguish between the supernatural and the merely arbitrary interference with law, between extraordinary moral acts and mere displays of power or prodigies. It is his business so to describe Christianity and its history as to make moral power and not physical miracle its centre. His spirit must be that of the words, “Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed.” It is an attitude towards miracles rather than opinions about miracles he must strive to fix. He must recognize that the belief in miracles represents some religious values which he is responsible for preserving. Among the many reasons why the miraculous narratives of the New Testament have been clung to and are still clung to by many people are the following :

#### RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE OF MIRACLES

1. They have become the expression of the central religious faith that “we are not shut up in a blind and

brutal course of nature." The belief in miracles is an attempt on the part of the religious man to express his experience that his surroundings can be conquered and made to "work together for goodness." As has often been pointed out, this experience is felt as if God broke through the regular course of nature for his sake—that is to say, the event has all the appearance of a miracle. A mere belief in the miracles of the New Testament alone can, however, be neither a satisfactory nor a full expression of this feature of the religious life, and of the present reality of God's help.

What the teacher has got to do, therefore, is to accustom the mind to feel the reality of God's help in other ways, by making the relation to God a personal and moral one rather than a physical and material connection.

2. The New Testament miracles have also become intimately connected with precious parts of the Gospel and faith in Jesus. They have acquired, in the words of Dean Inge, "a sacramental value."<sup>1</sup> They are, therefore, clung to tenaciously, not so much for their own sakes as for the sake of the faith of which they have become a part. Here, again, in our view, the connection is neither necessary nor useful, but a perilous one for the faith. But the fact that the connection *is* made is the reason why the shock of criticism imperils the Christian faith of many in these days. The Christian teacher must see to it that the two do not stand or fall together in the case of his pupils.

He can do so because he has largely in his hands the moulding of both the historic and personal faith of the child. The connection between the miraculous narratives and the reality of God's help on the one hand and the value of Christ on the other, has not yet been fixed in the mind of the child, and it is our duty to see that it is not made in such a way as to make the Christian faith dependent upon such narratives as that of the Virgin Birth, or the reanimation of the body of Jesus, or the walking on the sea. The necessary connection should be made exclusively with the moral and religious elements of the teaching and personality of Jesus. That is the

<sup>1</sup> *Truth and Falsehood in Religion*, p. 103.

only way to prepare the mind to move freely and independently later on amidst the miraculous narratives, without danger and with real profit.

### THE NEEDS OF ADOLESCENCE

The needs of the modern child, therefore, in order that he may be prepared to meet the inevitable criticism of the miraculous narratives may be summed up as follows :

1. He needs to be shown the comparative unimportance of these narratives in relation to the meaning and value of the Gospel, Christ and the Bible.

2. He needs to realize that the modern view of the world and the universality of unbreakable laws give more rather than less room for Christian faith.

3. He needs to understand something of the way in which miraculous narratives became connected with the personality of Jesus as well as the meaning and value which they have whether they contain accurate history or not.

To supply these needs will certainly require systematic teaching with regard to miracles at some period, and it cannot be postponed to adult age. The boy enters the 'storm and stress' period of adolescence generally before he is sixteen years of age, and it is then that he needs all the help that we can give him to meet his inevitable doubts and perplexities.

We have already seen that this kind of systematic work is neither necessary nor possible, as a rule, during the period of childhood. At that time the best that we can do is to formulate our teaching in such a way as indirectly and unconsciously to wean the mind gradually and healthily from its natural and naive credulity. Early adolescence then—somewhere between the ages of twelve and sixteen—is the one and natural opportunity for undertaking such a task.

The method adopted for this purpose will probably vary with the different types of teachers, and with the changing circumstances, but perhaps the following suggestions for a course of lessons may help the reader to work out his own plan :

1. Some of the simpler prophetic narratives might be studied—for instance, some parts of the Book of Jeremiah. This would be done with a view to analysing to some extent such prophetic phrases as 'God saith,' 'God did,' into their psychological and historical elements. They include all the natural causes and show the religious form in which the Bible describes what we would express by saying 'conscience' or 'insight' or 'thought,' etc. One might compare the Biblical report of an event with one of Cromwell's reports to Parliament, put one into the form of the other and show that Cromwell had as real a sense of God's guidance as the Biblical writer.

#### HOW THEY CAN BE MET

In this way it can be shown how the Bible passes over all the secondary causes, the human instruments and acts, the natural events and turns its thoughts directly to the divine cause, including everything under God.

2. A simple sketch might be given of the origin of the Gospels—not from a literary point of view, but in order to show the history of the material. It would start with the popular stories told about the Master during His lifetime, the memories of the disciples and their preaching of Jesus—these passing from mouth to mouth and sharing the fate of all oral traditions, taking different forms—sometimes twisted, sometimes exaggerated. The sayings would be translated from Aramaic into Greek, and some of them written down early for purposes of instruction.

Part of this account would be occupied with explaining the rise of unhistorical narratives, owing to misunderstandings, imperfect memories, influence of the belief in the Messiah and the extraordinary impression made by the personality of Jesus. The rise of such marvellous stories so early might be compared with what happened in the case of St. Bernard or St. Francis. It should always be made perfectly plain that such stories were not deceptions or inventions, but the natural result of the greatness of Jesus, the desire to do Him honour and the credulity of the age. They are stories of what He

might have done, being what He was, gradually turning into stories of what He did.

3. Then, in reading the Gospels, care should be taken in discussing each miraculous narrative to show the moral and religious ideas which it expresses, while noting frankly the possibility or probability of its not being an historical event.

4. Every opportunity should also be taken to note the difference between the ancient view of the world and the modern one. The idea of possession by demons as the ancient account of disease is a good illustration.

5. Most of all, at this time such a positive sketch of the Christian Gospel should be given as will naturally fix the impression on the mind that in essence its nature is moral and religious, and that the truth of its moral and religious content is for us independent of its alleged miraculous accompaniments.

For Books see Chapter XI.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE BIRTH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS

1. *The Birth-Stories in Christian Instruction.*—Christmas and Easter—The Meaning and Power of Christmas—The Character of the Biblical Narratives—The Birth-Stories in Early Childhood—How to deal with them—As an Introduction to the Life of Christ.
2. *The Birth-Stories in Adolescence.*—The Educational Opportunity of Christmas—The Religious Value of the Birth-Stories—The Religious Value and the Physical Miracle.
3. *The Easter Faith.*—The Easter Message and the Easter Faith—The Growth of the Easter Faith—The Experiences of the Disciples—Between Calvary and Pentecost—The Story of a Great Spiritual Struggle.
4. *The Easter Message.*—The Story of the Empty Grave—The Development of the Story—In the Synoptic Gospels and in the Gospel of Peter—The Permanent Faith.
5. *The Ascension in Christian Instruction.*—The Story in the New Testament—Its Value for Religion and in Modern Instruction.

#### I

### THE BIRTH-STORIES IN CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTION

#### CHRISTMAS AND EASTER

Most of the Protestant denominations of this country have almost entirely lost touch with the Church Calendar. From the point of view of religious education that is by no means all to the good, and it may yet be useful to revive some of the historical Church Festivals as the most effective points of contact for some of the most important elements in Christian Instruction. The only festivals that still keep their hold upon the minds of the people are Christmas and Easter, and that not because of their

Christian significance so much as because they fall at natural turning-points of the year and have become parts of our general life. In connection with them, however, religious and Christian ideas can still be easily awakened and points of contact can still be found in them for the growth of Christian faith and character. Educationally, therefore, they still provide an opportunity that ought not to be missed. Christianity is essentially an historical religion, and these two festivals are bound up with the historical personality of Jesus, out of which that religion grew. The mere existence of Christmas and Easter in our year does undoubtedly of itself serve some of the ends of Christian education. Men and women are still moved by them more or less consciously in a Christian direction. The work of the teacher is to make that movement more deliberate and more definite. How can we then 'keep the feast' at the present time most effectively for Christian instruction? How can we make the best use of these festivals and what they represent in Christianity deliberately for Christian purposes? The problem is not an easy one to solve in these days, when the very facts which these festivals are generally supposed to celebrate have become doubtful for so many, inside as well as outside the Church. Here we are only concerned with the problem in so far as it involves the use and value of the narratives of Birth, Resurrection and Ascension in the New Testament. What is the value of these narratives for the growth of Christian faith, knowledge and character? When and how can they still be used?

It is probably the case that the first religious impressions of most of us are due to some Christmas story or other heard through the firelight of some of the dark evenings before Christmas. Everything is in the teacher's favour at such a time. He finds his pupils in their most receptive mood. At such a time we get nearest to what may be called a natural and effective education—when an event like the Christmas Festival inevitably calls forth its own inevitable tale. The spirit of the season grips the imagination of the world. It has not only a long Christian ancestry, but it has grown up, as it were, with the human race itself. It is pre-eminently the season of childhood

and the flowering time of the imagination—the carnival of bright illusion. At present, it is the only time in the year when the child by right divine can claim to live in his own natural wonderland—peopled by Father Christmas and Santa Claus, by elves and sprites, by angels and the Christ-child.

### THE MEANING AND POWER OF CHRISTMAS

One of the dangers of modern times is to pluck the child out of that world too soon. The modern child is in danger of growing old and wise too early. One of the things we have to learn in moral and religious education is how to feed the imagination properly and effectively. For the years of childhood it is there that both morality and religion are making a home for themselves. The older religious education never cultivated the imagination and the sense of wonder because its angels were too crassly matter of fact, and its miracles were not numerous and wonderful enough. On the other hand, the modern theological movement is in danger of making its keen sense of historical truthfulness for adults into a barren literalism for children, of stunting the best powers of childhood and of disparaging the educational value of imagination. This does not mean that we must or shall tell the same stories in the same way as our fathers and mothers did, but it does mean that we must never let the opportunity of Christmas pass us by—whether in school or at home—without going through its open door into the wonderland beyond with the child's hand in our own. And in order to make the best use of the opportunity we must be very clear as to the end we have in view, the educational value of our material for that purpose and the most effective way of using it.

Can we still use the Christmas stories of the New Testament in our religious instruction, knowing what we do about their origin and history? And if we can, how many of them, when and in what form?

It is indeed true that very little room for doubt has been left us with regard to the real nature of these stories. They are almost all and almost entirely legendary in

character and an expression of faith in Jesus more than records of historical facts. There is no more evidence for their historical accuracy than there is for the many other similar tales told of other heroes in the history of religion and thought. Whatever use we make of them, it must be with our eyes open to their twofold character.

In the first place, they are variations and survivals in Christianity of the primitive wonderland of religion, going back finally, perhaps, to ancient nature-myths of man's childhood. Secondly, in the New Testament they have been purified and used as attempts to express the value of Jesus Christ to the Early Church—coming to the Christians probably from the Messianic beliefs of Judaism and the Greek stories of the Sons of God.

#### CHARACTER OF THE NARRATIVES OF CHILDHOOD AND BIRTH

It is impossible here to enter upon any detailed discussion of the various literary and historical questions connected with these well-known stories. The situation seems to be that the first generation of Christians had but little interest in the parentage and birthplace of Jesus, and there is but little evidence of their thinking that there was anything extraordinary about these things. Their minds were fully occupied with their intense belief in Him as the promised Messiah and His divine value for their lives. They made many attempts to explain why and how He could have this divine value as their Saviour. "He was the Man from Heaven," says Paul ; "He was the Incarnate Word of God," says John ; "He received the Holy Ghost at baptism," says Mark ; "His glory was not fully revealed till the Resurrection," says Peter. These are some of their main ways of expressing the divine impression made upon them by Jesus. As time went on, however, and they became more fully familiar with Greek ideas and stories of 'the Sons of God' and with Messianic predictions and theories, many of them also threw the expression of their faith in Jesus into the form of Birth-stories suggested by pagan and Old Testament legends, purified and moulded for their

purpose. These finally culminated in the story of the miraculous birth—thus tracing back His divine power as Saviour to the Incarnation itself and not only to the Resurrection, Transfiguration and Baptism. There are, of course, several different cycles of Birth-stories in the Gospels, and as the poetry of faith they are almost magical in their effect. As such no purer or sublimer tribute could be paid to the power and majesty of Jesus. In no place in the New Testament are we made to see more clearly what Jesus must have meant to the Early Church.

All literary and historical criticism becomes very secondary when once we read these stories as first of all and most of all pictures reflecting the faith and experience of the early Christians. The value of this material for the teacher is that it enables him to impress this moral and religious value more deeply than ever upon the mind. With regard to the educational use to be made of the Birth-stories it is hoped that the previous discussions of the miraculous and legendary narratives of the Gospels has already prepared the mind of the reader for what needs to be said.

### THE BIRTH-STORIES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

Useful and valuable as the stories of the Birth and Childhood may be at other times, there can be little doubt that their real and peculiar place in religious instruction is to be found at the point where the child is beginning to leave infancy for childhood, where he is beginning to pass from the world of pure imagination to that of history. That means somewhere between his sixth and eighth year.

It would seem that the natural course of religious instruction up to the age of about eight years should run somewhat as follows :

During the earliest years of teaching, the idea of God can be present to the mind of the child only as human. So, while in answer to the child's questions about the moon and the stars, the storm and the wind, we speak naturally of God as making them ; yet in the first more or less incidental teaching of religion, God must remain very much in the background and His elementary moral

qualities attributed to a figure nearer to the child's experience. Christian tradition and legend have already provided us with just such a figure in the Christ-child. The needs of the child can, therefore, best be met at this time by Nature and Wonder-stories in which the Christ-child plays the divine part of protector, friend, helper, comforter and adviser. These Christ-child stories in their form and content should be somewhat similar to fairy-tales with elementary moral motives behind them and in them.

In any case, whatever may be the kind of instruction given in these earliest years, there comes a time when the child is ripe for a gradual weaning from Wonderland into History, and from the idea of the Christ-child into something nearer the Heavenly Father. In instruction this represents the need for a connecting link between the religious fairy-tale and the historical life of Christ which is to follow. For this purpose nothing better has yet been discovered than a series of the half-historical, half-legendary Wonder-tales of the Bible. The series would begin with the Christmas stories of the New Testament, in which the figure of the Christ-child appears as the gift of the Father. It would continue with such stories as those of Elijah, Creation, the Patriarchs from the Old Testament and such Wonder-tales of Jesus as the Stilling of the Storm, Feeding the Thousands, stories of Healing, and finish up with tales of the more historical heroes, such as Moses, David and some of the Prophets—becoming less and less marvellous and legendary, while more and more historical and moral.

#### HOW TO DEAL WITH THEM

Every one of these must, of course, be told by the teacher in the spirit of the child. He must, for the time being, forget the difference between the world of external fact and that of the imagination. For the child they are both one. He has no conception either of natural law or of historical truth.

This, then, seems to be the proper place and value of the Christmas stories—at the transition time from infancy to childhood—from the period of religious fairy-tales to

that of religious history. They are the educational connecting link between the two—preceded by general Nature-tales of the Christ-child, who is the substitute for God, and followed by heroic stories of men who were the instruments of God.

This is their real home so long as the teacher can forget all his negative criticism of them and enter into the wonderland of the child. To do anything else is to sacrifice the welfare of the child to the exclusive point of view of the adult. Many are afraid, even at this age, of the question turning up—is this really true? If it does, however, what it usually means at this age is a pathetic request for more certainty and not for more doubt. In nine cases out of ten there need not be much hesitation in saying, "Yes, of course, it is true."

#### AS AN INTRODUCTION TO THE LIFE OF CHRIST

So far as their form is concerned, the Christmas stories should be told fully and almost recklessly at this age so far as the use of a trained imagination is concerned. Not that the Biblical narratives can be improved upon so far as they go, but their language is sometimes above the understanding of a child of six; they leave many things unsaid which must be supplied for the child, and they consist of several cycles of stories which are inconsistent with one another. Certain omissions are also necessary, especially so far as the physical miracle is concerned and the relations between Joseph and Mary. With these modifications the whole material of Matt. i. 19-ii. 23 and Luke i. 5-ii. 40 may be used for Christmas stories. This material cannot, without doing violence to it, be reduced to one consistent whole which can be narrated consecutively. Several cycles of stories can be made out of it. To discuss in detail the form and content of these cycles of stories would take us too far afield. The main point, however, is that the teacher should be able to enter fully and freely without any qualms of conscience into the wonderland of the child and put his informed and trained imagination to work so as to make each incident as full of action, mystery and detail as possible.

For late childhood also (9-12) the value of the Birth-stories will be somewhat similar. As we have already seen, some historical account must be given at this period of the life and work of Jesus as a whole. These stories cannot any longer remain as integral parts of that account. The distinction between what is 'true' and what is not 'true' is already sufficiently realized at this age to make it necessary for the teacher to mark the difference in some way. So far as one can see, the best way out of the difficulty is to interpolate these stories in a general introduction to the life of Jesus, and to use some non-committal formula when telling them. This method will serve the twofold purpose of distinguishing them from the main historical narrative, and also of helping to create the proper religious atmosphere for the life which is to follow.<sup>1</sup>

## 2

### THE BIRTH-STORIES IN ADOLESCENCE

With regard to the stories of Birth and Childhood in the religious education of youth and adults, very little need be added. There are probably two or three occasions on which the teacher will be brought face to face with the task of dealing with them—at the celebration of Christmas and in any study of the Gospels, or in any consideration of the typical modern difficulties with regard to the Bible and Christianity.

### THE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY OF CHRISTMAS

For adolescents the Christmas season should become something more than a festival of the Birth of Christ. It may fittingly be used to celebrate the birth of Christianity as a whole. The Christmas gift is the whole personality of Jesus, His life and death, His teaching, work and character. It is the best opportunity of the year to impress upon the mind the central place of Jesus Christ in the Christian Religion, and to discuss the essential meaning of Christianity. This is a subject which, of course, goes

<sup>1</sup> See Chap. VII. *passim*.

to the root of most of our religious and theological troubles. The solution of almost every other problem in the thought of modern days depends upon the answer which will be given to the critical question: What is Christianity? In the teaching of adolescents almost everything depends upon the view of the essential nature of Christianity which is placed before them. This, of course, is not the place to discuss that subject, but only for reminding the reader that the Christmas festival in many ways affords the best natural opportunity for definitely facing it.

In this wider interpretation of the educational opportunity of the Christmas festival, the New Testament stories of the Birth of Christ will take only a subordinate part. On almost all hands the subject of the Virgin Birth has ceased to count as a factor in the religious situation, though it may still be clung to by many as an article of belief, and though a frank discussion of it may be useful for clarifying ideas with regard to the essential nature of Christianity. Most scholars have also long ago come to the conclusion that historically we know practically nothing of the early life of Jesus, and that all the narratives pertaining to them are of legendary growth. That, however, does not mean that they cannot be used in a subordinate place for the purpose of making clear the central place and value of the Person of Christ.

Whenever and wherever the Christian teacher is called upon to deal with this subject and the stories connected with it in the New Testament—whether at Christmas or in critical discussions—it must be naturally with some positive and constructive end in view. He will certainly have to pass many negative and destructive verdicts on the proper occasions, but these he will only use to reach some higher end. It is also perfectly plain that the end he has in view must be a moral and religious one—to strengthen Christian conviction and to promote deeper and more intelligent Christian life. Every book in the New Testament was, of course, written directly for the same purpose, and when he desires to get the best and the whole Christian value out of these Birth-stories, he is trying to achieve the very purpose for which they were originally written.

## THE RELIGIOUS VALUE OF THE BIRTH-STORIES

The first question, therefore, to which the teacher must address himself is the religious value of the stories, and he must distinguish that from the physical miracle and the historical accuracy of the narratives. That religious value may be generally expressed by saying that whether the story of the Virgin Birth and the legends connected therewith have any direct historical value or not, there could be no more convincing proof of the tremendous impression made by the personality of Jesus upon the early disciples, and of their faith that He was divine in some sense than the circulation of these stories of His origin. It is not meant that that covers the whole of the religious value of the Birth-stories, but it touches the main point. Their value is increased rather than lessened when we take these stories to be not accounts of historical facts, but legendary growths. When they are looked at as variations and survivals of the primitive wonderland of religion, perhaps even bearing traces of the ancient Nature-myths of man's childhood ; when we remember that they must have come to the Christians through the Messianic beliefs of Judaism combined with the Greek mythology of the Sons of God, the fact that they were adopted, purified and adapted by the Church becomes an astounding proof of the unique significance of Jesus for His early disciples. It is from this point of view that they retain their value for the Christian preacher and the teacher of the senior classes in the Sunday School.

## ITS RELATION TO THE PHYSICAL MIRACLE

When he has thus put his pupils into the right religious attitude towards the Birth-stories, the teacher can then try to show how this religious faith in the divine value of Jesus is connected now and was connected in the minds of the Early Church with the physical miracle. He can easily show that at no time was there any essential connection for the Early Church in general between the two things. The mere silence of every part of the New Testament, with the exception of the first chapters of Matthew

and Luke, is itself enough to show that much. And even in these chapters themselves there is not a word to show that the authors laid any fundamental stress upon the physical manner of the Birth. The most that can be said is that the circle of disciples from which these chapters come did find in the story one expression of their sense of the supreme value of Jesus. There is absolutely no reason to think that faith, even for them, in any way depended upon the miraculous origin. Throughout the whole of the New Testament no appeal is ever made to the Virgin Birth as a reason for believing in Jesus as the Son of God, neither by Jesus Himself nor by His disciples. This separation of the religious value of Christ from the physical miracle may be further illustrated by pointing to the fact that whatever may have been true of the Early Church, in these days the call for belief in a miraculous birth is more often than not simply a hindrance to faith in Jesus. In very many cases it weakens, and sometimes it may destroy, the appeal that comes from what Jesus said, did and was in Himself.

It is upon the background of some such discussions as these that the teacher can prepare the minds of his pupils for a free and frank discussion of the literary and historical questions connected with these stories, which probably must have its place sometime in adolescence. The importance of these questions must not, however, be exaggerated, for once the Virgin Birth ceases to be an essential article of Christian faith and belief, the details of the literary and historical criticism cease also to be of supreme significance for the ordinary Christian disciple.

Once the stories themselves have been used in different ways and at different times to bring the growing soul face to face with Jesus Himself and His religious value, both Criticism and Education have done their work.

## 3

## THE EASTER FAITH

The Resurrection of Jesus and the narratives connected therewith are far more closely interwoven with the litera-

ture and history of the New Testament than His Birth. The whole subject is also much nearer the heart of the Christian Gospel. Belief in the Resurrection of Jesus was in some sense essential to the New Testament belief in the future life generally, and in some ways it is so still. It is, therefore, a much more complicated and necessary task to give these narratives their proper place in the teaching of the New Testament and in religious instruction as a whole. It is, however, an element of religious faith which belongs rather to the verge of maturity than to childhood's days. At any rate, it presupposes a fairly clear appreciation of the moral and religious value of the personality of Jesus, which seems impossible before adolescence.

The first condition of any fruitful dealing with the problem is to realize the distinction between the Easter Message of the empty grave, including the appearances to the disciples and the Easter Faith in the victory of the Crucified over death and His continued personal life with the Father.

Our real difficulties begin when we are face to face with the historical and distinctively Christian associations of Easter, with the Resurrection of Jesus and life beyond the grave. The modern study of history, theology and education forbids our continuing simply to retail the Biblical narratives in their Biblical form without some criticism of their nature and value. It is quite as impossible either to pass them by or to give them simply as merely popular legends. We know that it is not good teaching to force critical considerations upon the children. Our lessons must be based upon modern criticism certainly ; but, as a rule, it is only positive views and descriptions that we ought to present to those who are under the adolescent age. The critical considerations upon which those views and descriptions are based should be left for later study.

#### THE GROWTH OF THE EASTER FAITH

It is certainly an important part of the work of the Christian teacher to transmit a knowledge of the Bible and its contents as well as the meaning and history of

Christianity. Both these, however, must be subordinate to the growth of Christian faith and the formation of Christian character. In the end every part of the curriculum must be judged by the contribution it makes to the growth of the Christian life. Fundamentally, therefore, what we are concerned with here is not the historical value of the Resurrection, nor its place in a theological system, but how it can help to build up Christian characters to-day.

There are many who assert emphatically that a direct communion with the Risen Christ is part of their own personal experience. Such communion, however, must in any case belong to a more or less mature Christian faith, and be very personal in its nature. Moreover, it is impossible to think of it as a force independent of an impression already made by the personality of Jesus as revealed in His earthly life. We cannot hope to produce such experiences in others as a direct power for the growth of a Christian life. Repeated as well-authenticated history, however, they may help others to feel the force of the impression made by Jesus, and thus be of primary educative value in a Christian direction. It is, therefore, from this point of view that the Resurrection narratives of the New Testament must be judged, and it is for this purpose they ought to be used in religious instruction—in so far as they incorporate the genuine historical experiences of the first disciples. That is also why the teacher must come to some conclusion as to how much history is contained in these narratives. His great need is to try to realize for himself the actual experiences through which the disciples went after the death of Jesus, and then give to his pupils some positive and concrete picture of that experience.

#### THE EXPERIENCES OF THE DISCIPLES

The main features in the narratives that are recognized as historical by modern scholars are easily described. The Crucifixion had for the moment shattered the growing conviction of the disciples that their Master was the Messiah of God come to establish the Kingdom. In their

despair they fled to Galilee sick and sore at heart. Before many weeks were over we find them back again in Jerusalem, with their faith restored and openly proclaiming Jesus as the Risen Christ. They were now convinced that the Cross was not the defeat of Jesus, but ordained of God for His greater triumph. How their faith was renewed between Calvary and Pentecost we cannot now describe with any great confidence. It is difficult to pick out the historical facts underneath the stories of the Resurrection—whether the grave was found empty ; how, when and by whom the Lord was first seen. A close study of the narratives themselves reveals the fact that it is impossible to obtain any clear and consistent picture of the external events. The most that we have any historical right to say is, that the change from despair to faith was accompanied by a series of appearances of the Risen Lord to some of the disciples. Most probably, also, Peter was one of the first and foremost to experience this recovery and be instrumental in spreading it, and probably the change took place in Galilee.

It is, of course, impossible and undesirable to eliminate the mystery and the sense of miracle from this progress of the disciples out of deep despair to the recovery of faith. Upon any view of the narratives, it will always be a very difficult task to describe the psychological process that is involved. In spite of its difficulty, however, it is certainly the main business of the teacher to attempt some positive description that will produce a sense of reality, and also some sense of the moral struggle through which the disciples fought their way to victory.

The question is, how can such a consistent and concrete picture of the experience of the disciples be constructed out of the materials at our disposal in the New Testament ? Many attempts have been made to provide the teacher with such a narrative, which must naturally be consistent alike with the spirit of the New Testament and with the results of modern criticism. The following tentative suggestions more or less represent the general result of these attempts.

## BETWEEN CALVARY AND PENTECOST

We can, to begin with, easily follow the disciples as they fled heart-broken on the fateful day from Jerusalem. We can follow their thoughts and questionings on the way, as well as their tender memories as they pass spot after spot for ever consecrated by something said or done by their Master. He must have been continually in their thoughts by day, and in their dreams by night, all the way to Galilee. How was it possible that He could have failed? Was He deceived? Were they deceived in Him? How could God have let such an One die, and in such a way?

Every hope seemed gone; and yet—and yet they had been surer of Him than they had been of God Himself. The light in His eyes, the tones of His voice, face, form and figure came back to them. He had given them something that no one else ever had—a new life that could never be destroyed.

So, with faint gleams occasionally upon a sea of despair, they are home in Galilee once more. It was a struggle between the divine impression made upon them by His life with them, and the shame and terror of the Cross. One after another they came to Capernaum—each with the same fight going on in his soul. They could not help but meet, if only to comfort each other and to remind each other of the happy days that were gone for ever. The world would never be the same again. Perhaps it was at Peter's house they met in the glimmering light when the day's work was done. How often they went over the great romance of their life—how sad to think of!

Did they hear any rumours from Jerusalem? Did some of the women who had stayed to the very end come with tales of an empty grave, and of passing visions of a well-known face? As they talked of Him, did their hearts begin to burn within them as of old? The authority of the Master began once more to assert over them its sway stronger than death. They read the 53rd of Isaiah, and saw in it a picture of the suffering Servant who was still their Master. And was it not Peter—repentant, aching, impulsive Peter—to whom one night was given, in the very midst of eloquent, reckless words, the glowing

vision of the Face Divine? That moment of ecstasy came back again and again with greater power and reality to the man who wanted it most, and who could never forget the first great moment in which he had said, "Thou art the Christ." Then also from him the fire spread to hearts made warm again amidst the scenes of the first great triumphs of their Lord, after the first terror had spent itself. Then at last the coming Pentecostal Feast called them back to the scene of the tragedy that was slowly becoming a triumph in their minds, and on the scene to a greater Pentecost than ever their brightest dream had pictured.

If any view of the Resurrection—whether traditional or critical—is to become educationally effective, or anything more than a rigid theological dogma, it will be by trying in some such way as this to make it psychologically probable and real.

### THE STORY OF A GREAT SPIRITUAL STRUGGLE

It is in any case a difficult task which faces the teacher here; but he can never give up the attempt to accomplish it. Christian teachers who give thought to their work can never remain satisfied with merely retailing now one, now another, of the Biblical stories without attempting to give one unified picture. It is the inner history and experience of the disciples during this time that must be made as real and vivid as possible. On one side, the sense of miracle and mystery by which the events are surrounded in history and faith must not be lost. But there is no justification, on the other side, for burdening the moral experience of the disciples with an ancient and materialistic view of the universe which we cannot wish to perpetuate.

Once the growing mind has been impressed by some conception of the severe spiritual struggle through which the disciples passed triumphantly, the youth may be taken later on through the Biblical narratives themselves. They will then be ready to appreciate their moral meaning, and their more or less legendary character may be discussed without danger. The emphasis of the Resurrection

will have been laid for them in the proper place, namely, on the supreme value of the personality of Jesus, and the impossibility of thinking that death could ever destroy it. Their hold upon the life to come will be strengthened, and their ideas with regard to it kept pure and moral. Finally, they will also have had the supreme lesson on the infinite importance of human personality to God and man. These constitute the real Easter faith, the essential constructive and educative elements in the narratives of the Resurrection. And that teacher will keep the feast best of all who can give the simplest, and the most real, picture of the inner history of the disciples between Calvary and Pentecost.

## 4

## THE EASTER MESSAGE

So far as the Easter Faith of the New Testament is concerned, and probably so far also as the needs of moral and religious instruction go in our day, we might rest satisfied with the foregoing discussion of the Resurrection. It does not, however, do full justice to the New Testament itself. The Easter Message of the visions of the Lord and of the empty grave are also part of the New Testament as well as the essential Easter Faith. It is, of course, the religious faith in the continued life of Jesus in a full and personal form that must remain central; but we must face also the forms taken by that faith in the minds of the early Christians, the events which produced or occasioned their belief, and especially the relation in which the empty grave and the resurrection of the body stood to their belief in the continued life. This discussion of the Easter Message will naturally be suitable only for the later adolescent and senior classes.

## DISCUSSION OF THE EASTER MESSAGE

We cannot enter upon such a discussion with any profit unless we distinguish between the general conditions

and beliefs of the first century and those of modern days. For us the faith in the continued personal life of the Lord, or the permanent value of the character and personality of Jesus, may be and actually is quite independent of the historical facts with regard to the empty grave, the physical resurrection and the details of the visions of the first disciples. These questions are of interest to us mainly because they were so closely connected with the form taken by the religious faith of the early Christians, and because of the light they cast upon the way in which the disciples defended that faith. It is, therefore, quite possible that, while sharing the faith of the first disciples, we may have to reject as mistaken and inadequate some of the reasons which they gave for holding that faith.

### THE STORY OF THE EMPTY GRAVE

We have, it is true, only a limited knowledge of the views of that time with regard to the relation between the body and the soul. More or less Greek views of the body as the prison-house from which the soul escaped at death were to some extent current among the Jews in a modified form; but there can be little doubt that the popular Jewish view (with which in this instance we are mainly concerned) could not think of the future life—in the Messianic Age, for instance—without the resurrection of the body in some form or other, that is, without an empty grave.

The first disciples could not, therefore, believe in the continued personal life of the Lord without at the same time taking it for granted that the grave was empty, whether they examined it or not. The earliest witnesses do not mention the empty grave, nor is the empty grave ever given as a reason for belief in the Resurrection. All the same, it is very probable that even Paul would say that the grave must have been empty. The two points at issue are whether any stories of the empty grave accompanied the visions and the belief in the Resurrection from the first, and if so, whether there was any historical foundation for them. The evidence of the New Testament is very uncertain and very in-

adequate on these points, and the opinions of modern scholars are widely divided. Some think that all the stories of the empty grave are simply legendary growths based on the natural inferences of the disciples from the visions, and that there is no historical justification for them. Others think that there must be some substratum of historical fact underneath them, and that the grave was really found to be empty. They then attempt in different ways to explain the fact. Probably the truth is that the evidence does not justify a definite conclusion either way. In any case the New Testament seems to show that the empty grave had no influence in *producing* the belief in the Resurrection. It is never spontaneously referred to by the Christians as a reason for belief. It received prominence only in answer to the objections raised by Jewish opponents. Attention having once been called to the grave, the Christian imagination continued to play about it, until we have at last the marvellous descriptions of the actual Resurrection itself in the Apocryphal Gospels. In the New Testament there is still a good deal of restraint shown in describing what happened at the grave itself; but even there we can trace a definite development in the argument and the stories connected with it.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF THE STORY

In Paul and in the early speeches of Acts there is no mention of the empty grave at all. In Mark, three women go to the grave to anoint the body, and find the stone rolled away, while in the tomb a young man in a white robe sits. He tells them that Jesus is risen, and bids them tell the disciples that the Master has gone before them into Galilee. They run away frightened and do not say a word to any one in their awe. Since the genuine end of Mark is lost, we can only guess how the narrative was continued. In Matthew we are told that the Jews had set a guard of Roman soldiers to watch the tomb, which was sealed. When the women came a great shock of earthquake occurred, and an angel of the Lord descended and rolled away the stone. The soldiers are struck down

unconscious, but the angel shows the tomb empty to the women and bids them tell the disciples.

#### IN THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS AND THE GOSPEL OF PETER

This they do immediately. When we come to John, we find that Mary Magdalene goes alone to the tomb, sees the stone rolled away and the tomb empty. She tells Peter and the other disciple whom Jesus loved. They run to the place and see for themselves that the body is not there. From a comparison of these narratives about the empty grave as they are found in Mark xvi. 1-8, Matt. xxvii. 62-xxviii. 16, Luke xxiv. 1-12, John xx. 1-10, with the silence of Paul in 1 Cor. xv. 1-8 and of Peter in the speeches of Acts, it will be seen that the development of the narrative is in two directions—the aim apparently being to make it more and more certain that the grave was really empty, and that the only way to account for the fact was the Resurrection. The New Testament stops short of giving a description of the actual Resurrection itself, though the story of the guard and the earthquake in Matthew comes near it. This last step is reserved for the more unrestrained imagination of the Apocryphal Gospel of Peter. However many legendary elements may have crept into the narrative of the New Testament, it is reserve itself when compared with the unlicensed grotesqueness of the Gospel of Peter. There we are told that the elders and scribes hold watch at the grave with the Roman guard under Petronius. The grave is sealed with seven seals, a tent is pitched near by, and the crowds from Jerusalem come out to see. During the night the heavens are opened and two men come down, the great stone moves of itself to one side, and the two men enter the grave. Then all the soldiers see three men come out, and they are followed by a cross. The heads of the two men reach to heaven, while that of the man whom they support reaches above the heavens.

The whole story has become grotesque—as far removed as anything could be from both the restraint and the spirit of our Gospels. There is no point, however, as we trace the story backward from the Gospel of Peter

to the Gospel of Mark, at which we can say: Here we come at last upon a bedrock of fact. We can only comfort ourselves by saying that the story of the empty tomb was after all only a dark and dangerous bypath even for the faith of the early disciples, while we are thankful that we need not travel that way at all in order to reach as strong a faith as theirs in the permanent value of the character, work and personality of Jesus, and in His continued, full, personal life after death. The only reason for following this bypath at all in our moral and religious instruction is that the contents of the New Testament demand it, and that it enables us to illustrate the difficulties and weaknesses as well as the strength of the Resurrection-faith of early Christianity, and that it throws into more vivid contrast the reality underlying its temporary forms.

## 5

## THE ASCENSION IN CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTION

This discussion would not be complete without some reference to the Ascension, but a few words will suffice to place it in its proper relation to the Resurrection.

## THE STORY OF THE ASCENSION

In his Gospel Luke barely mentions the fact that Jesus "parted from them and was carried up into heaven," but in the Book of Acts he gives the only detailed description of the Ascension itself to be found in the New Testament. The narrative is not an integral part of the Book of Acts. It seems, indeed, to be deliberately introduced by the author in order to correct the impression made by the Gospel, that the Ascension took place on the same day as the Resurrection. In the spurious ending to Mark also it takes place on the day of Resurrection. In John, while there is a scarcely perceptible interval, according to one passage, between the two events, the Gospel as a whole looks upon the Resurrection, the

Ascension and the Parousia as one spiritual process. In Paul, too, there is no room for the Ascension as a separate event. For Him the Resurrection is a resurrection to the right hand of God in power, and it is thence He makes Himself known as still living to His disciples, including Paul himself.

As a matter of fact, the idea or the faith which is here clothed in the garb of history is elsewhere generally expressed by the figure of Christ sitting at the right hand of God, the phrase being used about a dozen times by the different writers of the New Testament.

How these different representations of the Ascension are related, and exactly how the Ascension was connected with the Resurrection on one side and with the Parousia on the other, it is difficult to say. Perhaps we do not know enough of the history of early Christian thought to form any clear judgment. In any case, whatever view may be held as to the bodily resurrection, very few would now insist upon a literal interpretation of the very materialistic Ascension story in Acts. Its allegorical or mythological character is very generally recognized. In its present form, at any rate, it is quite unhistorical.

How it arose is another matter. It may have been originally the story of another Resurrection-vision with the usual mysterious disappearance at the end. More important than the form of the representation is the meaning of the Ascension for the faith and life of the disciples—what it stands for in their experience. It was undoubtedly intended to make clear and intelligible the faith that Jesus is Lord, that as God's representative all authority has been placed in His hands. Not only has He come out of His grave alive, but He has come as the living Lord. It is essentially the same faith as is expressed also through belief in the Resurrection. Its educational value and purpose are similar to those of the Resurrection-visions, and if it is to be used at all in religious instruction, its place is among those visions. The Ascension is not an historical event, but it is another attempt to represent an historical faith in terms of ancient views of the world which have disappeared. We may have the same faith, but our changed views of the world

and heaven make it impossible for us to express it in the same form. We must express it not in terms of time and space, but in terms of morality and religion—which also the first disciples did for the most part.

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## CHAPTER XII

### THE APOSTLE PAUL AND HIS LETTERS

1. *Paul in the New Testament.*—Jesus and Paul—Sources of our Knowledge—Extent and Character of the Sources.
2. *The Historical Significance of Paul.*—His Spiritual Independence—His Vindication of the Independence of Christianity—The Creator of the Christian Church, Christian Theology and Christian Literature—Paul in Christian History.
3. *The Permanent Value of Paul.*—Matthew Arnold and Paul—Hellenism and Judaism in Paul—Paul's Two Great Aims—the Free Personality and the Community.
4. *Paul in Christian Instruction.*—Paul and Jesus in Modern Instruction—Paul a Difficult Subject—Nevertheless Necessary.
5. *The Story of Paul's Life.*—Natural and Artificial Difficulties—The Traditional Method Unsatisfactory—The Story of Paul.
6. *The Work and Teaching of Paul.*—The Background of Paul's Work and Teaching—His Personal Experience—His Typical Struggles—The Motives of Paul's Theology.
7. *The Ethics, Theology and Religion of Paul.*—Paul's Ethical Teaching—The Theological Framework—Three Main Lines of Thought—The Anti-Jewish Apologetic—The Missionary Theology—The Theology of the Spirit—Central Doctrine of Paul—The Religion of Paul.

#### I

### PAUL IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

It is certainly the first and the ultimate task of the Christian teacher to make Jesus Christ live effectively in the mind and heart and will—in the conscience of His pupils. With as little doubt, the second task of the teacher of the New Testament is to make Paul, the greatest messenger Jesus has yet found, deliver his own peculiar message to men, and exercise his own peculiar power over men in the service of his Lord. As the second great personality in the history of early Christianity, the

Apostle is without a rival. Strictly there is no third except the great Unknown who stands behind the Johannine writings.

### JESUS AND PAUL

At the beginning of the greatest spiritual movement in human history stand these two personalities of such extraordinary power and originality—one of them at least, if not both, towering into sheer sublimity far above all the heroes of the centuries. In them and in the relations between them are mirrored all the most important spiritual problems which have ever vexed the soul of man—the reality of the unseen, the nature and means of communion with God, the value of personality, the essential nature of Christianity and its relation to other religions, the relation between history and religion as well as the relation between religion and theology. To make these two live again in the souls of men is a work not only of surpassing interest, but also of surpassing importance for the moral and spiritual welfare of mankind. This has become self-evident so far as the personality, work and message of Jesus are concerned. What is, perhaps, not yet so fully realized is that it is essential to understand and appreciate the personality, work and message of Paul also, both for the sake of his own independent value and in order to understand the place of Jesus in and above the whole Christian movement. It is, indeed, the secret of the power of early Christian history that these two stand together at its birth and baptism. The problem of their relation to each other in dependence and independence, holds the key to the interpretation of the New Testament.

In order to get within reach of the solution of that problem and in order to enter into the full heritage of the New Testament, the Christian teacher and the Christian disciple must try again and again to make Paul a living reality to his mind and conscience.

Fortunately, we have fuller and more direct information about Paul than about any of his contemporaries. That knowledge comes to us mainly from two reliable sources.

## SOURCES OF OUR KNOWLEDGE OF PAUL

1. Incorporated in the Book of Acts is a document which is generally recognized as a first-hand account written by Luke the Physician, the friend and companion of the Apostle. This provides us with a direct record of an interested spectator who was also something of a hero-worshipper. Paul's own revelations of his mind and heart in his letters find an echo and an effective comment in those more concrete and particular observations of his faithful fellow-worker.

2. We have also the good fortune of possessing at least eight and probably ten letters written or dictated by Paul and more carefully preserved than any other literary records of his time. They are all genuine personal letters, written to his converts and Churches. They are not treatises or essays dealing systematically with special subjects of general interest, but letters meant originally for the use of individuals or small groups all more or less known to the Apostle. They may not, therefore, enable us to give a systematic account of his thought, but they are all the more valuable because so often they are unconscious revelations of his life and character.

One of them, and the most brief of all—the letter to Philemon—is a very intimate personal note, written merely to accompany the return of a runaway slave to his owner, and recommending him to the renewed care of his Christian master. For all its brevity it is a miracle of self-revelation.

Another was written to Christian disciples in Rome, and stands at the other extreme from Philemon, on the verge of becoming a systematic discussion of the main message of the Apostle.

There are two letters (probably incorporating a third) written to Corinth in Greece and dealing mostly with some definite problems of the application of the Gospel to the life of the Church and the community.

One is a letter of thanks to his Christian friends at Philippi in Macedonia, acknowledging their care for him while he was in prison at Rome, and full of personal

revelations of his heart and of his love for them and for his work.

Two are directed to the Christians of Salonica, and are mainly noted for their discussions of the early Christian eschatological hopes and fervours which were creating difficulties among them. Another is a strong appeal to stand fast in Christian liberty, which went to the Christian Churches of Galatia in Asia Minor ; while the last two—Ephesians and Colossians—went to the Province of Asia—the most populous and significant region of the Empire, and in many ways the centre of the religion, commerce and thought of the world.

The three Pastoral Epistles to Timothy and Titus are also attributed to Paul, but it is doubtful whether more than fragments of them at most have come from him, while there is no doubt that the Epistle to the Hebrews has been falsely attributed to the Apostle.

These are the documents which provide us with authentic raw-material—so far as they go—for describing the history, work and personality of Paul. The letters show that he was a man who had an extraordinary capacity for self-revelation. He possessed the infrequent gift not only of observing the facts of his inner life and the struggles of his will, but also of interpreting and describing his soul's experiences with clearness and power—in an intelligent and intelligible form.

Luke also was a descriptive writer of no mean power, and the dramatic moments in Paul's adventurous travels lose nothing of their significance in the telling.

#### EXTENT AND CHARACTER OF THE SOURCES

There is, however, still a great deal that these documents (and some other more indirect records of Paul in Acts and elsewhere) do not tell us about the Apostle, and it is necessary to emphasize the fragmentary character of our knowledge at its best. They barely cover the last ten years of his life and activities. There are at least fifty years—and those the formative and most energetic years—about which we know very little directly, though we may be able to infer a great deal from the letters

and Luke's diary. Moreover, the letters which have been preserved represent only a small portion of Paul's correspondence even during the last period of his life. Being also purely occasional in their nature, they take for granted a great many things essential for our full interpretation of them and their writer. They contain only fragments of Paul's thought, and though there are many signs of a more or less complete intellectual system behind the letters, it is a precarious task to reconstruct that system out of the broken fragments which they preserve.

The result is, that there still remain many unsolved problems with regard to the life, personality and theology of the Apostle, and it is necessary for the teacher to realize that fact.

There are problems not only of the chronology and course of his life, but also of the character and significance of his education, the meaning of his conversion, the history of the first seventeen years of his life as a Christian, his relation to Barnabas and to the first Apostles, of his exact relation to the Greek world and its thought, the influence of the Mystery-Cults upon him, as well as of his historical and spiritual relation to Jesus Christ. These and many similar questions with regard to Paul are still not settled.

It is true that we can often fall back upon probable inferences, and upon our general knowledge of the time and its conditions for help to solve them ; and a great deal of what passes as Paul and Paulinism has its sole source in such inferences.

The teacher will, therefore, find it necessary to give his whole mind to an ever-renewed study of Paul, to scrutinize carefully every picture and deal honestly with his pupils with regard to his own reconstruction of the figure of the Apostle.

## THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF PAUL

Whatever inadequacy there may be in our sources, it is abundantly clear that Paul played the main part in

the development of Christianity, and we can see clearly some of the main directions in which his central significance for early Christian history lies.

### PAUL'S SPIRITUAL INDEPENDENCE

1. In the first place, he became of primary importance because he had fought his way more or less independently to a moral and spiritual level of thought and life which was not far removed from where Jesus Himself had stood. It is true that he did not reach that level either so easily or so naturally as Jesus. The Master towers far above the Apostle in simple and natural majesty of bearing, and in His unclouded certitude of soul. Paul's outlook was never so clear nor so direct and effective as that of Jesus. Paul had come to it through devious ways over arid, trackless wastes, and he came in bedraggled garments and bespattered with mud, sore and sick, and with his patience worn by failures. Still he had, with so much travail, come so far upon his way that it seems to have required only the touch of the Spirit of Jesus at a critical moment for him to discover the secret of God and His Fatherhood, man and his brotherhood, life and its triumphant redemption.

In the story of Christian origins, Paul is no secondary figure who has simply borrowed all that he has. In many ways he is a personality of striking originality in his experience and conception of the Gospel as well as in his intellectual and missionary application of it. There is nothing second-hand about his religious faith, although the direct and indirect personal influence of Jesus at the critical moment counted for so much in his history. There is little that is merely borrowed in his theology, though he owes so much to the conceptions of Pharisaism. His Church is an original conception in spite of its growth out of the Primitive Christian community. His universal mission was a new thing in history, in spite of its many parallels with the activities of the vagrant priests of Mithras and Isis, of the wandering teachers of an eclectic philosophy and of the 'apostles' of Judaism in the Hellenistic world.

Nearest to Jesus he stands in the originality and universality of his spiritual experience, the directness of his touch with God, the courage with which he accepted the results, the daring and the stubborn will with which he obeyed the vision when it came.

It is futile to speculate whether Paul would ever have won his way through without the timely help of Jesus. We only know that the compelling touch of the Master-soul meant for Paul the final opening of the door of life, and that for Paul it was the figure of Jesus that stood for ever more at the threshold.

This, then, was the first great deed of Paul—to come groping in the dark to the very threshold of the new discovery and to recognize in Jesus the hand of the Lord who helped him through.

#### VINDICATION OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF CHRISTIANITY

2. Secondly, when Paul had found in Jesus Christ the God he sought and the fuller life for which he longed, he also found the movement which Jesus had already created in danger of settling down into an obscure Jewish sect. He recognized in it the making of a world-religion and the stronger rival of the Judaism of his dreams. So he boldly went forth to make it what it was meant to be and what he somehow knew Jesus Himself had meant it to be. In thought and practice he freed from the bonds of Judaism the Gospel of the free grace of God revealed and incarnate in the living Christ for the redemption of mankind. He justified its independence and originality, practically and theoretically, both against its weak-kneed friends and its Jewish enemies, using their own intellectual and historical weapons against themselves. He used the Jewish terms and Jewish doctrines to vindicate the independence, originality and supremacy of the new religion. It was probably the only means by which he could theoretically set free the Christian Gospel from the bonds of Judaism as well as from the halting compromises of the Primitive Jewish-Christian Church.

In practice also it was Paul who did actually take the new religion out into the wide world and planted it firmly

in the heart of the great cities of the Roman Empire. He was the most effective missionary Christianity has ever known. His mission was far greater in idea and plan and method than even in its actual performance. It is true that he had a large number of helpers in this work, and some forerunners, but his was the master-mind and master-will in the whole movement. Before he died, the main strategic points in four great provinces of the Empire—Galatia, Asia, Macedonia and Achaia—had been occupied by groups of Christian converts, themselves energetic centres of missionary work for Christ, knowing of each other and rivalling each other in their efforts within the bonds of the same organization. That work meant planting the new Gospel not only in the heart of Hellenistic Asia but also of Europe. In the hands of Paul it meant planting Christianity also in a form in which it could be assimilated by the peoples of the Græco-Roman world. He started the process of inserting the Gospel into the living categories of that world—its yearning for redemption, its hope of a divine Saviour, its mystery-rites, its collegiate consciousness and its philosophic terms. Such was the second great deed of Paul.

#### THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY, CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

3. Three other things he did which were each of primary significance for the history of Christianity, but which we can here group together. He became the effective creator of the Christian Church—local and universal; he was the first Christian theologian; and he laid the foundations of a Christian literature.

Paul not only evangelized the great cities, but also organized his converts in each place and shepherded their souls carefully and patiently. He kept in close touch with his churches and had his messengers continually passing to and fro among them.

It was Paul also who first attempted to give the Christian Gospel, experience and movement a definitely intellectual and theological expression. It has indeed been said that his whole Gospel was a theology. He

certainly seems to have been impelled by his very nature and training to search for intellectual forms by means of which he could express, for his own satisfaction and the edification of his converts, the meaning of his and their new experience and Gospel. He seems also to have definitely formulated his Gospel in intellectual forms as a weapon of offence and attack in his dealings both with Jews and Gentiles.

Finally, the service of Paul to Christian literature is twofold. He was the first comprehensively and effectively to claim the Old Testament as a Christian book, and also in his own way to justify that claim. More directly, his own letters form the first nucleus of an original Christian literature. He so discussed the questions which were of vital and passing interest to his Churches in his letters that they introduced the Christian movement effectively into the realm of the highest literature. In some senses they were in form and matter a new phenomenon in the Greek, Roman and Jewish world of their time. Many of their great passages must have come to the men of the time like streams of living water to thirsty souls. Using the colloquial Greek of the common people, they gave fresh and classical utterance to some of the deepest and most universal experiences of the human heart. Their fervour and enthusiasm, their freshness and moral earnestness, their directness and simplicity, must have come as a new revelation from God to those who were accustomed to the foolish garrulity, the elegant posing and the empty rhetoric of the majority of the literary men of those generations. These were unique services, and it is they which give to Paul his unique place in the development of early Christianity.

#### PAUL IN CHRISTIAN HISTORY

We need not enlarge upon the significance and influence of the Apostle Paul in and upon the nineteen centuries which have passed since his death. His power over certain types of mind has been incalculably great, though other men, even after repeated efforts, have utterly failed to appreciate his greatness or to understand him. Many

have even shrunk from him in disgust. He has been more ardently followed (though seldom loved), more bitterly hated and more seriously misunderstood than almost any other great personality in history. Men like Marcion, on the one hand, and Luther, on the other, have revelled in his presence, while the Neoplatonist and the Hellenic mind have almost always hated him. He has been too Jewish for these, while for others he has been too much of a Greek. By way of veneration or reaction, however, almost the whole history of Christianity might be written in terms of the Pauline experience and the Pauline theology. At times he has overshadowed even the figure of Jesus Himself, and a long line of the men who for good or ill have made the history of Europe bear the marks of Paul even more deeply than he did 'the marks of Jesus.' It has sometimes been for ill rather than good, because the Paul who was thus honoured was not the full and complete Paul.

## 3

## THE PERMANENT VALUE OF PAUL

## MATTHEW ARNOLD AND PAUL

Ernest Renan was of opinion that Paul was now at last coming to the end of his long reign, but, as a matter of fact, what he saw was the reaction against a false view of Paul, dissolving into a better appreciation of Paul's permanent significance and value—as a man and a thinker and a Christian personality. The fitting man to answer Renan, therefore, was Matthew Arnold, who in spite of many qualities which seemed to unfit him to become the interpreter of Paul, was yet the first to lead us back to a better and more human understanding of the Apostle. "Precisely the contrary," he writes in answer to Renan, "I venture to think, is the judgment to which a true criticism of men and things, in our own country at least, leads us. . . . The reign of the real St. Paul is only beginning; his fundamental ideas, disengaged from the elaborate misconceptions with which Protestantism

has overlaid them, will have an influence in the future greater than any which they have yet had—an influence proportioned to their correspondence with a number of the deepest and most permanent facts of human nature itself. . . . Not in our day will Paul relive, with his incessant effort to find a moral side to miracle, with his incessant effort to make the intellect follow and secure all the workings of the religious perception. Of those who care for religion, the multitude of us want the materialism of the Apocalypse, the few want a vague religiosity. Science, which more and more teaches us to find in the unapparent the real, will gradually serve to conquer the materialism of popular religion. The friends of vague religiosity, on the other hand, will be more and more taught by experience that a theology, a scientific appreciation of the facts of religion, is wanted for religion. . . . Both these influences will work for Paul's re-emergence. The doctrine of Paul will arise out of the tomb where for centuries it has lain buried ; it will edify the Church of the future. It will have the consent of happier generations, the applause of less superstitious generations. All will be too little to pay half the debt which the Church of God owes to this 'least of the Apostles,' 'who was not fit to be called an Apostle because he persecuted the Church of God.' "<sup>1</sup>

#### HELLENISM AND JUDAISM IN PAUL

The way may seem far from the Apostle Paul to Matthew Arnold, but in their very different ways they were both engaged in the same never-ending task. They were both defending a gospel which was to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness, but which was intended to lead to a method of life involving the reconciliation of Hebraism and Hellenism while preserving the one from Hellenisticism and the other from Pharisaism. In that struggle is to be found the spiritual significance of Paul, and Matthew Arnold is the best witness to its permanence. The analysis may be crude and incomplete,

<sup>1</sup> Matthew Arnold, *St. Paul and Protestantism* (popular edition, London, 1888), pp. 1, 2, 80.

nevertheless it is true that the main values of modern life are to be traced back to the messages of Greece and Palestine—the struggle between them and the many attempts to reconcile them in the individual and social life. Paul was the first (unless Philo of Alexandria be accounted worthy to stand by his side) to realize and to face the problem in any comprehensive way as well as to do any sort of justice to some elements at least in both. He did attempt to combine the freedom of Greece with the ethical emphasis of the Jew into a great ideal of a free moral personality as the end and aim of all his efforts. He at least attempted to pour the energies of the divine community of Israel and the comprehension of the philosophic republic of Greece into a new universalism which was to take shape in a world-wide Christian Church.

It is in these two things—the emphasis on the freedom and independence of the moral personality and his emphasis on the solidarity of the race 'in Christ'—that we find the permanent value of Paul, and also his peculiar touch with modern needs and interests. A thorough study of him in the light of these two great ends has an abiding value.

### PAUL'S TWO GREAT AIMS

For these two ends he is almost a fanatical enthusiast with an almost unearthly strain of reckless abandon to his cause, ready to pay almost any price for its success—in aches and pains of body, in the travail of his soul and even in a tattered reputation—giving continually of his best and truest to it, without money and without price and without thanks, at the sacrifice of comfort, home, friends and people.

This capacity for unstinted devotion to such causes is directly due to the fact that he looks upon his task as almost exclusively a religious one. He is, indeed, a typical example of an intensely religious personality—God-haunted and God-subdued—and of what such a personality can accomplish among men. His personal experience of religion was a classical one. It is still the clearest and most characteristic example of one of the two most

important types of the specifically Christian experience and faith. It was characteristic of him that this did not become a mere 'religiosity,' but an intense passion for righteousness, a constant pressure upon his will. It also made an imperative call upon his intellect—urging him to a more and more thorough and comprehensive expression of his faith in intellectual terms, and to its incorporation in the social life of the world. Every age stands in need of being kept in touch with such men, and to be reminded of the fundamental values they express—and our modern time perhaps more than any other.

Naturally, these permanent values in Paul are combined with many elements merely temporary and passing. His picture of the world, his belief in angels and demons, his views of body and soul, and many others of his beliefs, have gone never to return, having had their say and done their work. If we judged Paul merely by his theological method, whether in argument or in the formulation of his doctrines, he would remain for us a figure of the past with whom we have now very little in common.

He himself, however, is none the less a typical personality, and the work he performed in and through these temporary forms is none the less permanent in its essential nature and significance.

The historical achievements of the Apostle Paul are great and various, but they do not exhaust his work. In and through the things he said and did, he left behind him the impress of a personality of enduring value—greater than anything he ever said or did.

## PAUL IN CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTION

### PAUL AND JESUS IN MODERN INSTRUCTION

In many ways it is a difficult task to give the Apostle Paul his own proper and peculiar place in a system of Christian instruction and education. He is a much more

complicated personality than Jesus, was born and worked in a more complicated situation. The stamp of his age is seen more clearly and oftener upon his thought, work and life. He was called upon to meet many practical problems which were beyond the horizon of Jesus. His touch with fundamental human nature was not so direct and simple as that of his Master.

The universalism of Jesus, for instance, may not be so explicit in expression and application as that of the Apostle. It was, nevertheless, quite as real. It was more effective in the long run, because its roots went down to simpler and more permanent elements in humanity. He found universal humanity in every individual in his relation to the Father. The forms of Paul's peculiar contribution to universalism are more extensive than intensive, more cosmopolitan than psychological. He reads humanity in terms of nations rather than of individual human nature. What Jesus therefore gave to the world was a universal Gospel, but the special contribution of Paul was a universal Church and a federation of religious communities within which the individual personality must hold a more or less precarious place. Paul himself, it is true, made the promotion of both his aim, but even he did not always succeed in resolving the inevitable tension between them. The universalism of Jesus is therefore more easily grasped than that of Paul, and it also provides a more central and effective educational motive. In any case, it is clear that it is far easier for the modern world to find points of contact with the Gospel of Jesus than with the Church of Paul.

First of all, too, it is in the region of the concrete and varied application of the Gospel that the educational value of the Apostle Paul mainly lies, whereas Jesus brings us in a simple and direct way face to face with the spirit and fundamental principles of that Gospel. The latter, of course, are also to be found in Paul, but in order to see them we have often to thrust aside a mass of strange material which prevents the clear and direct revelation of them. Paul himself, and others for him, have built around his central heart high walls which are not always easy to scale.

## PAUL A DIFFICULT SUBJECT

The concreteness of his presentations in his theological doctrines, his Church and his many other definite applications of the Christian faith are educationally deceptive, as the history of Christian instruction plainly shows. They are fairly easy to transmit superficially, but more often than not it has been easier to rest content with the Pauline forms than to press forward and inward beyond them into the central faith and Christian spirit of the Apostle.

The problem, therefore, of teaching Paul as a real element in Christian instruction and education is no light task, and cannot be solved without a good deal of hard work and strenuous thought.

In one thing alone does Paul seem at first to have an advantage over Jesus as a teaching instrument. We feel that we ought to know more about him and to know him more personally and directly than Jesus. Though a biography is no more possible in his case than in that of Jesus, still Paul does speak to us directly in his own letters as well as through the dramatic story of Acts, while we have our knowledge of Jesus only at second or even third hand.

This, however, does not help us so much as it might seem to do. It is balanced by other and more vital considerations. The letters of Paul are, of course, of vital importance for our understanding of him, but somehow or other, great as their power often is, they have not in them the same power of revelation as the material of the Synoptic Gospels. Jesus even through His reporters can reveal more of Himself in a few brief sayings than Paul in a long letter.

Generally speaking, therefore, Paul provides material more intractable in the hands of the modern teacher than does Jesus. It is much more complicated and needs more manipulation, because Paul is always moving more towards the circumference of the Christian Gospel and life. He deals much more largely with the particular concrete and temporary application and expression of the Christian Gospel.

## PAUL NEVERTHELESS NECESSARY

This fact, however, though it may set before us a difficult task, means that we have all the more need of Paul alongside of Jesus in any complete scheme of Christian instruction. It is not only that he fills a large place in the New Testament, but he provides the necessary complement to Jesus and His teaching. The practical application of the Gospel under the direction of the Apostle Paul is an essential element in its full presentation, and therefore in Christian instruction, especially in view of our modern situation. We need a much clearer recognition of the fact that such a comprehensive and devoted crusade for the incorporation of the Gospel in the intellectual convictions of men, in their personal callings and work, and in social institutions, is not only a corollary to it, but a necessary element of the Gospel itself. The application may change from age to age, but it is in the process that the Christian Gospel finds its reality, fulness and power.

It is, then, one of our great tasks to make the Pauline material in the New Testament effective as one of the primary elements in Christian instruction. But before we can make this material effective we must somehow make the figure of Paul and his work interesting in the deeper sense to the modern mind ; and in order to make him interesting we must so far as possible make him intelligible. Our task is to promote and cultivate a better and clearer understanding of Paul in order to enlist the hearts and emotions of men on his side so that he may grip their will and conscience.

## 5

## THE STORY OF PAUL'S LIFE

## NATURAL AND ARTIFICIAL DIFFICULTIES

As we have seen, it is not easy to make Paul intelligible. We have to meet the natural difficulties arising from the

nature of his personality, the course of his education, the character of his moral and spiritual experiences, the complication of his environment, the intricate windings of his subtle mind, the variety and wide extent of his activities as well as the extraordinary contradictions revealed in his historical influence upon different types of men and their very different reactions under his influence. In addition, however, to such natural difficulties as these, we have made other difficulties for ourselves by our traditional methods of approaching and dealing with the task of teaching Paul. We have generally started from the wrong end and emphasized the wrong side. Paul, the theologian, has loomed far too largely and too early in our minds as teachers, and in our instruction. It is indeed a matter of grave doubt whether a detailed study of Paul's theology as such can ever become an integral part of Christian instruction at all except in mature, select and more or less expert circles. The difficulties of making it really intelligible and interesting are so great as permanently to stand in the way of our finding the simpler and more real Paul who stands behind his theological constructions. At any rate, if we let the latter control our approach to him we are quite likely to remain simply puzzled by them and to find the door leading to the understanding and appreciation of Paul shut against us.

#### TRADITIONAL METHOD UNSATISFACTORY

We must, without doubt, pluck up the courage, so far as all effective instruction is concerned, to break away quite definitely and decisively from the traditional methods. Our educational study of Paul must proceed on more historical lines—begin with the dramatic human elements in his life and adventures, go on to describe him as a Christian disciple, and try to make him intelligible as a Christian missionary and organizer, selecting only so much of his letters and his thought as may be absolutely necessary for this purpose. Then and then only will come the time to present him as the creator of a Christian Literature, as a theologian and in his universal significance.

Once we adopt this general attitude to our task, the distribution of the Pauline material in a progressive Christian instruction will not be so difficult.

### THE STORY OF PAUL

It is not much that we can usefully employ in the curriculum for childhood. That will probably consist of some of the more dramatic incidents in the life and adventures of Paul the Traveller—selected and somewhat more adapted to this age from Mr. Basil Matthews' *Paul the Dauntless*, and including some justifiable imaginative construction of the early days at Tarsus, the scene at the stoning of Stephen, the story of the conversion in its more external aspects, some of the adventures in Galatia, Ephesus and elsewhere, the arrest and first trial, the voyage to Rome and maybe one or two others. These will not amount to anything like a life of Paul, but they may easily be strung together so as to form a more or less connected narrative.

In early adolescence will come the attempt to describe the life and work of Paul as a Christian man and as a Christian missionary more fully and more connectedly. For this purpose, the inspiration and guidance offered by *Paul the Dauntless* are invaluable and unique. There is nothing like it in modern literature, and the teacher will do well to soak himself in its spirit and method before he begins his task.

The merely wearisome recital of the three missionary journeys, with the deadly repetition of more or less empty names of cities and countries stereotyped for the memory, has always been a heavy burden for the teacher to carry and for the pupil to endure. Much more interesting and much more illuminating would be some attempt to make Paul's travels live as pictures even if the record of his journeys be far from complete. Still more to the point would be some effort to distinguish between the experimental methods of the first period in Cilicia, Antioch, and the journey with Barnabas, and the later period when Paul went off on his own lines, and the vision of a great imperial mission stood clear before him.

This story of the life of Paul should probably be accompanied and illustrated by some appropriate quotations from the Book of Acts and the Epistles ; and also by some elementary account of the origin and purpose of his letters—some two or three of them being selected as examples in their proper connection.

## 6

## THE WORK AND TEACHING OF PAUL

## THE BACKGROUND OF PAUL'S WORK AND TEACHING

Following this story of Paul as a Christian man and a Christian missionary would come in middle and late adolescence a study of the work of the Apostle as a whole in relation to his heritage and environment, his character and personality.

1. The first part of this task is to provide the life, thought and work of Paul with its own peculiar background. An attempt must be made to give some description of Judaism and Pharisaism, mainly as the soil out of which Paul grew, and partly as one of the enemies he had to face in carrying out his chief task. Secondly and on the other hand, the Hellenistic popular thought and religion in the Roman Empire must also be present in the background, to a certain extent, as one of the influences which moulded him, but more as the power he set himself to conquer and subdue to the life of the Gospel.

There is also a third element which must have its place in any introduction to the study of Paul, namely, the Primitive Church. He may have had fleeting glimpses of Jesus in Jerusalem and may once and again have listened to His voice, but more often than not the Primitive Church historically stands between him and the Master. To the first disciples belong the earliest experiences of the Risen Jesus, as well as the preservation of the memories of His earthly life. It was they also who established the first Christian community. Their significance in the New Testament is therefore twofold. They

preserved and mediated the direct and personal influences of Jesus and also, both positively and negatively, prepared the way for Paul.

The similarities and differences between Paul and these three elements in his heritage and environment should be revealed fairly clearly in our study of the Apostle. It was upon these that he built, but it was these also which he had to fight on behalf of his Gospel.

In view of the present state of our knowledge of the Primitive Church as well as of Judaism and of the Hellenistic religion, the teacher will not find it an easy task to make this part of his study of Paul useful and fruitful educationally.

### PAUL'S PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

2. The second element in the discussion will be some analysis of the moral and spiritual experiences of the Apostle, and especially of his conversion. No one has yet succeeded in making the experiences of Paul on the way to Damascus either historically or psychologically quite intelligible. Probably there will here always remain a surd beyond our calculation and elements beyond our control. But it would be a great service to Christian instruction if only the peculiar character of Paul's experience could be made clear by comparison with other classical instances of similar conversions like those of Augustine and Luther, which involve in general the same type of sudden break with the past and a thoroughgoing reconstruction 'by the grace of God' of the whole life.

Out of these experiences sprang the great aims which afterwards controlled the lifelong activities of Paul—the ultimate values revealed in that life and work. These we have already described generally as the creation and promotion of free moral personalities on the one hand and of a universal Christian community or Church on the other.

### THE TYPICAL STRUGGLES OF PAUL

In the pursuit of these aims we find Paul more and more forced into antagonism and a desperate struggle

with the legalism of Judaism and the Primitive Church on the one hand and on the other with the non-ethical paganism of the Hellenistic world.

It is in the emergence and development of these struggles in so definite and defined a form that the central historical and permanent significance of the Apostle Paul for education lies—the life-and-death struggle of new ideals for supremacy over the old, incorporated in concrete forms.

It is essentially the same struggle as we find in the history of all the prophetic figures of the race—in Luther and Savonarola, in Wyclif and Hus, in the Hebrew prophets and in Jesus, in different forms. It might, in fact, be said that one of the greatest tasks of all education is to make this struggle living to, and live again in, the minds, hearts and will of the young.

A comparative study of some of these outstanding personalities from this point of view would be one of the most significant contributions to spiritual education, and Paul has undoubtedly his own contribution to make for this purpose. The struggle against Judaism is most clearly represented by the letter to the Galatians, and the struggle against Hellenistic paganism by First Corinthians ; and these letters might well be studied definitely in this connection.

### THE MOTIVES OF PAUL'S THEOLOGY

3. What will provide the climax to the study of these struggles—both positively and negatively—and also the best introduction to the study of Paul's theology, as well as the best bridge between it and his experience, is a definite consideration of the pedagogic and apologetic elements in Paul's life and thought. Most of Paul's theological constructions spring directly out of his needs as a defender of the faith, against its two great enemies, and then out of his needs as an organizer and teacher of his converts.

Behind this motive of the missionary teacher there is, of course, the primary demand of his own personal experience of Christ and God for intellectual explanation

and interpretation upon a mind like that of Paul. From this point of view Paul's theology is an attempt to universalize his own personal experience; but that experience is not allowed freely to find its own intellectual expression. In the particular forms it takes it is conditioned now by categories borrowed from his old Pharisaic theology, and again by influences from Hellenistic thought. It is conditioned also by the urgent need of defence against Judaism on the one hand and paganism on the other; and finally also by the more positive desire to promote the growth of the Christian life in his converts. It is the loose combination of these more or less divergent sources and motives that explain the varied forms and complexities of Paul's theological constructions.

Educationally, it is a far more important task to unravel these motives that led to all the theologizing of Paul than to study his doctrines in detail or to attempt to reduce his often occasional theological statements into a consistent system. It is in order to realize vividly the force and character of these motives that we need here a definite study of Paul as a missionary teacher—the defender of the faith against Jews and Greeks and the faithful pastor of the flock of Christ.

## 7

## THE ETHICS, THEOLOGY AND RELIGION OF PAUL

From all this we can then proceed more hopefully to a special study of Paul's Ethics and Theology, and in the end come back through them once more to that fundamental religious faith which he shared with Jesus Christ and found also in Him completely incorporated and made 'the power of God unto salvation.'

### PAUL'S ETHICAL TEACHING

1. In order to avoid any danger of misinterpreting Paul's theology, it is just as well first of all to emphasize

his intense moral earnestness and teaching. Not that we can speak of ethics in any technical sense or of ethical theories in connection with Paul, but we need to be sure that his full message is not only an intellectual formulation of the Christian experience, but also a definite application of the Gospel to the life of the will, both in the activities of the personal life and in social relations.

The ethical imperative is as much a reality to Paul as it was to Jesus. The moral sense of responsibility, the energy of the will to struggle and to work were not paralysed by his trust in God, his profound experience of the free grace of the Father, and his sense of the absolute sovereignty of the divine will. It was only stimulated by them to achieve greater ethical triumphs than ever before. For him as for Jesus, the primary incarnation and application of religion was in a sturdy morality of personal life, and the main qualities of the personal, ethical ideal which thus issues out of Christian faith are love, sincerity, simplicity, freedom and independence, purity, loyalty and gratitude.

Nor does Paul fail to meet many of the problems of the social life as they emerge one by one in the experience of himself and his converts. Neither a politician nor a social reformer in the narrow sense, yet he does devote a great deal of attention to the most important social institutions—to marriage and the family, nationality and the State. He may have been mistaken in his judgment with regard to the proper Christian attitude towards slavery, marriage, the place of women or the Roman State, but for him as for Jesus, love, which includes active, unselfish service as its first element, was the root-principle of the Christian life, and he took it seriously and applied it intelligently.

More than all in this connection, it must not be forgotten that Paul was the effective creator of the Christian Church—the greatest social institution in the history of the world. He has a clear vision of its social significance, and it becomes under his hand the germinating ground of a new world. In it there is neither bond nor free, neither rich nor poor, neither male nor female. It is a democracy of equals, each with his own work and function

according to the grace which God has given him, and all living together as brothers in the peace and happiness that can come only from willing co-operation in unselfish service and good deeds. He may not have been always faithful to his principles, but his ideal of the Church, its life and its tasks, is a social contribution of supreme value to the world.

2. We cannot here enter upon anything like a sketch of Paul's theology, but must be content with suggesting the main lines upon which a study of it for educational purposes should run. It certainly ought, first of all, to be studied in close relation to his work as a missionary, a teacher and apologist.

### THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

For these purposes he succeeded in putting his message into a form—more or less metaphysical—which reads like a complete, finished, concrete, simple and clear story so far as its fundamental outline is concerned. It runs as follows :

Christ, the Son of God, a superhuman, heavenly, Divine Being, in willing obedience to God the Father's behest came down from heaven in the fulness of time, was made man, and through His death and resurrection was "exalted to the right hand of God." By this means He has redeemed those who believe in Him from the flesh and sin, the law, death and Satan, and has thus brought to them the salvation of God of which the holy influence and working of the Holy Spirit of God and of Christ is the guarantee here and now.

Under the presuppositions of that age it is a simple and a clear story, however strange it may sound to our modern ears. It was one of Paul's educational triumphs to have formulated such a story, and not the least of its merits for its time was its mythological character. To us it may not be so simple as it looks, for we have left the whole universe in which it moves far behind us ; but the people of the time questioned the possibility and probability of no word of it. To them the actors were all real, and the means adopted were all perfectly natural.

In its separate elements it was no new theology created by Paul. Pagan thought was already familiar with divine beings who came down to earth, while the death and resurrection of these divine beings were not strange to them. Already, also, the Primitive Church had its pre-existent Christ, and they had seen in the Cross and Resurrection their redemption. They knew the Holy Spirit, and in His marvellous working had found the earnest of their full salvation. What Paul did was to universalize their Christ, to set the Cross defiantly and triumphantly in the centre of the picture, to gather together the scattered elements of their beliefs into one complete and coherent drama of salvation, to enunciate it clearly, to proclaim it as something new and independent of Judaism, as well as to defend it vigorously against all attacks and to justify it with all the strength and subtlety of his speculative intellect.

### THREE MAIN LINES OF THOUGHT

We do not, however, find in the Epistles of Paul any complete and unified system of theological doctrines elaborating this outline and framework, and covering systematically all its details. What we do find is that his mind seems, as a result of his needs as a missionary, to have been working in three different directions which correspond to three aspects of his life and work. There is, firstly, an Anti-Jewish Apologetic. Secondly, there are the elements of a theology designed to support his Gentile Mission and to overcome paganism. Thirdly, there are in his letters numerous traces of a more or less original and independent theology which springs more directly out of his Christian experience and that of his converts.

These three cycles of thought are constantly overlapping one another in Paul's letters, and it is impossible to weld them together into one consistent system. That may, however, only be due to the fragmentary character of the letters as compared with Paul's own mind. So we must be content with giving a brief description of each one separately, so far as we can trace their character through scattered and occasional references and dis-

cussions in Paul's letters. That seems to be the only way in which we can make them of real educational value, and the only way by which we can arrive at some understanding and appreciation of the practical meaning of Paul's theological thinking.

### THE ANTI-JEWISH APOLOGETIC

(a) The first line of thought was intended to meet Judaism, to defend and to justify the independence and superiority of the Gospel against Jewish attacks. This Anti-Jewish Apology is mainly concerned with the means of salvation, and discusses the relation between faith and law, works and grace, the Old Testament and the Law, bringing out the great contrasts between the new and the old religion. It uses the Jewish terms and ideas of the Christ, law, justification, sacrifice and propitiation, to interpret the personality and work of Jesus, to explain the character of His death and to describe the means and method of salvation. It starts with the dogma of the corruption of human nature and the inability of man to fulfil the whole law. It proceeds to the doctrines of the complete obedience to the demands of the law in the life of Christ, His death as the complete and final sacrifice for sin as well as the full satisfaction of the law, making the whole system of Jewish sacrifices useless, His Resurrection proving the acceptance of that sacrifice by God. This line of thought finally issues in the doctrine of Justification by Faith and closes with eschatological doctrines of the final salvation in the Kingdom of God ushered in by the Parousia of Christ, the Last Judgment, and the Resurrection of the just, clothed in 'spiritual bodies.'

### THE ANTI-PAGAN THEOLOGY

(b) The second line of thought goes out to meet the Gentiles and supports the appeal of Paul's great mission to the Greek, Latin and Oriental pagan world. It uses Greek and Pagan terms and ideas of the Logos, incarnation, the dying and rising again of divine Saviours, fear

and dread of the world of demons, salvation and redemption through a mystico-physical union with the divine by baptism, common sacrificial meals and other sacramental mystery-rites, as well as the idea of the contradiction and universal struggle between the flesh and the spirit combined with the belief in the immortality of the spirit when released from the bonds of the flesh. These terms and ideas are used in order to interpret to the pagan mind the personality and work of Jesus Christ as well as the method of salvation through Him. This line of thought also starts from the dogma of the corruption of human nature, its sins in this case being against the law of conscience ; it proceeds to interpret the heathen gods as demons, from the evil power of whom men need deliverance ; or as mere images weak and ineffective. It sketches a doctrine of Christ as the Lord who is the incarnation of the Son of God in flesh to procure full and final redemption from the curse and power of the flesh, the death and resurrection as the triumph of the spirit over the flesh or as the conquest over the world of evil demons. This the Son accomplishes in a representative capacity for the race of men, thereby winning for Himself a place " far above all rule and authority and every name that is named, not only in this world but also in that which is to come." This redemption from the flesh and from the power of demons may be shared by all men through faith, which has here a tendency to become a belief in this series of 'evangelic facts' as well as trust in the Son of God. The salvation becomes the actual possession of the believer by the mystic sharing of Christ's death and resurrection which finds its expression in a sacramentarian doctrine of the Church, Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

It is not meant that these two lines of thought are to be found in the writings of Paul separately and independently drawn. What is fairly clear is that the unsystematic theological thinking of the Apostle for apologetic and missionary purposes ran on both these lines, now on one, now on the other. They cross and recross each other at many points, while they run parallel to each other in many places. They find their unity in the

common purpose which they serve and in the simple theological outline of the history of God bringing salvation to the world of men through the Cross—the outline which lies behind them both. The individual doctrines elaborated in both are only temporary expedients, because in both Paul is evidently making experimental attempts to solve the intellectual problems of the new religion either under the pressure of opposition or the urgency of his mission.

### THE THEOLOGY OF THE SPIRIT

(c) There is, however, a third line of thought running all through Paul's letters which seems to bring us much nearer to the heart of the Apostle's thinking than either of those we have mentioned. Both in expression and content, it is much more nearly the spontaneous and unfettered result of his own independent thinking, and it seems to have grown much more directly out of the fulness of his specific Christian experience. It is more ethical and universal in its terms and categories. It has many connecting links with both the Anti-Jewish Apologetic and the Mission-theology of the Apostle. It is not worked out to such an extent as they are, and it might perhaps be more properly called the germinal principles of a theology rather than a theology in itself. Instead of being an exploitation of traditional and sometimes worn-out Jewish and Pagan ideas, it brings for the interpretation of the Christian experience comparatively fresh and unexplored conceptions which still have the promise of life in them.

In this third attempt, Paul starts from his own experience of the origin and growth of the new life in him. It is a new life of the Spirit. He knows and interprets it as the influence and power—the dealing of the Spirit of Jesus Christ and of the Spirit of God with his soul. In this experience 'the Lord is the Spirit.' The first principle of this third expression of his message is therefore the equation and identification of Jesus Christ with the Holy Spirit of God, and it proceeds to the equation of the working of that Spirit with the whole realm of

moral character, activity and aspiration. The whole of the new life is the life 'in Christ' or 'in the Spirit.' "It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me." Fundamentally, the meaning which Paul puts into these terms is not a mystical but an ethical one. The union with the Spirit or with Christ is first of all moral and not metaphysical. The Cross becomes the central moral principle of the universe—that of love's sacrifice—and 'dying with Christ' is given a moral instead of a mystical interpretation. It is an ethical life-union which comes by faith as the active and trustful surrender to the guidance of the Spirit.

These terms and ideas may have historical associations—both Pagan and Jewish—but as a whole they show an original and independent attempt to create a Christian theology directly out of verifiable elements in Christian experience. Jesus the Holy Spirit is far more nearly the direct formulation of the Pauline experience than either Jesus the Christ or Jesus the Son of God.

Traces of these conceptions are to be found all through Paul's letters and in connection with most of his theological doctrines, including his so-called mystical and sacramentarian doctrines of the Church, the Lord's Supper and Baptism. They are the most genuine and the most spontaneous production of Paul's life and thought—the most original and most fruitful contribution made by him to the intellectual expression and application of the Christian experience and Gospel.

### CENTRAL DOCTRINE OF PAUL

These three cycles of thought have the same metaphysical background, namely, the eternal will of God, the world of spirits, good and evil, a pessimistic view of human nature, the two worlds of flesh and spirit and the same eschatology.

More than all, the central doctrine of all three is that of the Person and Work of Christ in its various forms. Christ and the Cross are the great symbols in all three. Interpreted in terms of legalism and sacrifice, they are the means of salvation in the Anti-Jewish Theology.

Interpreted in terms of pagan sacrifices and sacramental mysticism, they are the method of salvation in the Mission-Theology, while they are interpreted in moral and spiritual terms in the Spirit-Theology and describe the character of its salvation.

It is evident that Paul saw very clearly that the supreme task of any and every Christian Theology is to interpret the Cross and the Christ, the Son of God and the Spirit behind them.

3. We cannot, however, be satisfied with even all this as a full and satisfactory account of Paul's presentation of Christ. In Paul's letters we can still see and feel behind the theological story the moral and religious appreciation of Christ which gave the breath of life to it. Behind both there stands the historical figure of Jesus, though the details of the earthly life are not much used, but often overshadowed and hidden in the actual structure of the theology by the more comprehensive theories of the Heavenly Christ and the Son of God.

### THE RELIGION OF PAUL

Paul may not himself have distinguished between the two, but that does not alter the fact that the spiritual energy of his personal religion can still be felt and recognized behind and between the lines of the theological story—in the spiritual content with which it is filled, in the character of God it implies, the Christ it celebrates and the salvation it promises.

The essential character of this religion shines through the theological formulations everywhere.

It is the Gospel of God as the Father of grace and love, revealed in and through Jesus Christ. It is the faith which throws itself in utter trust upon that almighty, gracious will of which Christ is the type and power. It is the experience of forgiveness, reconciliation, peace and joy which grows out of that faith. It is the overpowering life of ministering love which expresses that faith in all the multitudinous relations of human society. It is the hope by which that life is sustained and strengthened. It is the feeling or knowledge that all this has been and

is being paid for by God Himself in Christ. In a word, it is the actual experience of salvation already obtained in principle by union with the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

Such were the main features and character of the message of Paul. Both as religion and as theology it is dominated in every part by the figure of Jesus Christ. He is the instrument and means of salvation. He is its method, and He is the salvation itself. It is the Christ-faith which created the whole scheme ; it is the Christ-love which applied it ; it is the Christ-hope which sustained it. All its power is from Him and in Him and for Him. As a whole it is the greatest tribute which has yet been paid to Christ's sovereignty over human souls.

#### BOOKS

In addition to the few books here mentioned, there is rich material for the general study of Paul, and this list represents only a few of the most useful studies for the teacher.

CONE (ORELLO).—*Paul the Man, the Missionary and the Teacher.* (London, 1898.)

DEISSMANN (A.).—*St. Paul : A Study in Social and Religious History.* (London, 1912.)

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GARDNER (P.).—*The Religious Experience of St. Paul.* (London, 1911.)

JONES (MAURICE).—*St. Paul the Orator.* (London, 1910.)

MATHERS (JAMES).—*The Master Builder.* (S.C.M., 1920.)

MORGAN (W.).—*The Religion and Theology of Paul.* (Edinburgh, 1917.)

RAMSAY (W. M.).—*St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen.* (London, 1895.) *The Cities of St. Paul.* (London, 1907.) *The Teaching of Paul in Terms of the Present Day.* (London, 1913.)

SCHWEITZER (A.).—*Paul and his Interpreters.* (London, 1912.)

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In the following the material is put in Lesson or Story form :

FRANKS (R. S.).—*The Life and Writings of Paul*, vols. v. and vi. of *Bible Notes.* (Woodbrooke Committee, Croydon, 1910.)

MATTHEWS (BASIL).—*Paul the Dauntless.* (London, 1918.)

STEVENSON (J. G.).—*The Children's Paul.* (London : J. Clarke & Co.)

WOOD (ELEANOR).—*The Life and Ministry of Paul the Apostle.* (London, 1912.)

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE JOHANNINE LITERATURE, THOUGHT AND LIFE

1. *The Johannine Problem.*—The Nature of the Problem—The Strength of Traditional Views—Significance of the Discussion for the Teacher—The Main Issue.
2. *The Origin and Purpose of the Fourth Gospel.*—Date and Origin of the Gospel—Its General Nature—The Features of the Time—The Complex Motives of the Gospel.
3. *Content and Character of the Gospel.*—Philosophy and Theology of the Gospel—Historical and Religious Elements—The Main Ideas of the Gospel.
4. *The Value of the Fourth Gospel.*—Its Historical Significance—Its Abiding Value.
5. *The Fourth Gospel in Modern Instruction.*—The Difficulties of Teaching the Gospel—It must be taught as a Whole—Its Allegorical Character—Other Difficult Features.
6. *The Fourth Gospel in Childhood.*—Its Summary Statements of Truth—The Historical Fragments in it.
7. *The Background of the Johannine Gospel.*—Preparatory Studies—The Historical and Religious Background—The Doctrine of the Logos—The Terminology of the Mystery-Religions.
8. *The Fourth Gospel in Christian Education.*—The Johannine Life and Thought as a Permanent Type—Its Modern Value for the Full Growth of the Common Christian Experience and Life.

#### I

### THE JOHANNINE PROBLEM

THE third main section of the New Testament, revealing the third typical presentation of Christ in the life and writings of the early Christians, consists of what is known as the Johannine literature, including the Fourth Gospel, the Epistles of John and the Apocalypse.

### THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

It is universally recognized that this literature brings before us a series of the most complicated problems associated with the history of early Christianity. With these problems we are here concerned only in so far as they are concentrated upon the Fourth Gospel and affect the permanent value of that Gospel, its place in the understanding and appreciation of the New Testament, its effective use in Christian preaching and teaching, and its valuation as an element in the process of modern Christian education.

The teacher will find it very difficult to thread his way intelligently through the maze of the English discussions of the Johannine problems from Westcott down through Drummond, and Sanday to Bacon, Scott and Gardner. It has always been recognized that 'John' represents in some way the ripest fruit of early Christian life and thought. Clement of Alexandria, at the end of the second century, called it the 'spiritual' Gospel as compared with the other three. Luther, in the sixteenth century, ranked it far above the others in value, while almost all modern writers share the traditional view in this respect.

### THE STRENGTH OF TRADITIONAL VIEWS

Up till very recently also, 'John' has been almost from the beginning universally identified with the Apostle, the son of Zebedee, and that view is still clung to very tenaciously—in form at least—by most English writers. In no case has it been so difficult for modern criticism to make any real headway against traditional views. It is true that Dr. Sanday has made concession after concession to German theories. It is true also that in some form or other almost every outstanding English scholar expresses the view that the Fourth Gospel must not be dealt with in the same way as the Synoptics. It is always affirmed in words that we must depend upon the latter for the historical facts about Jesus. In practice, however, the result is largely the same, namely, that the final appeal

is almost always made to the record of 'John.' It is a significant fact that no commentary of any independent value has been written in English since the epoch-making one by Westcott in 1869. He seems to have delivered the final verdict upon the Fourth Gospel from the traditional point of view. There has not yet been any serious attempt at an English commentary on 'John' written definitely and consistently from the modern standpoint.

### SIGNIFICANCE OF DISCUSSION FOR THE TEACHER

The whole situation is very unsatisfactory and confusing for the practical teacher of the New Testament, while the usual method of procedure has had a deadening effect upon New Testament study as a whole in this country. So long as the essential character, origin and purpose of the Fourth Gospel remain in doubt, the progressive study of every other part of the New Testament remains precarious. From the teacher's point of view at least, the mere question of authorship has loomed far too largely in all Johannine discussion. He is not greatly concerned whether the author is to be called John the Apostle, or John the Presbyter, or merely 'John,' or no John at all. Unless it be really true that John the Apostle was martyred at Jerusalem soon after the death of Jesus, there is no reason why he should not have written a great theological and philosophical discussion on the significance of the Person of Christ towards the end of the first century. Nor is there any conclusive reason why some other disciple of Jesus at the beginning of the second century should not have produced a fairly reliable historical account of his Master. It may be that the probabilities are not in favour of either supposition. Still, the weight of these probabilities depends upon the definite results of our study of the Fourth Gospel itself in its content, nature and purpose.

This is the main issue so far as the Christian educator is concerned. He reads this Gospel and finds it full of apparently contradictory elements, and he asks how best he can understand and make intelligible this combination of opposites. What was its value for its own time?

What contribution can it make to ours? How can he make effective use of it in preaching and teaching the Gospel? These are the ultimate Johannine problems. They are largely independent of questions of authorship.

### THE MAIN ISSUE

If the value of the Gospel is great in itself, then it is a matter of no consequence who was the author except for the fact that he wrote it. If small, it is made no greater by postulating its apostolic origin. Upon this main issue the teacher must come to some definite conclusion before he can even start dealing with the Fourth Gospel as material for instruction. If the Gospel is meant to be an historical account of Jesus, then it must be either of very little value to him or it becomes the standard for testing all other accounts. Its nature and the differences between it and Mark, for instance, are such that it is surely a vain thing to imagine that it can be used to supplement or to correct the Synoptic material. Its outline and character must become the basis of our historical life of Jesus.

If, on the other hand, the Gospel was from the first meant to be a religious and theological interpretation of the Person of Christ, then it is again a vain thing to think that it can be studied and interpreted except as such and therefore as a whole. Then the attempt to use any considerable parts of it in teaching the historical life of Jesus can only result in confusing the clear pictures derived from the first three Gospels and doing an injustice at the same time to the Fourth Gospel itself. That is really the issue before the practical teacher, and this he cannot evade.

The view taken here with regard to this fundamental issue has been already anticipated in several forms in previous chapters. On all important points it is that taken and worked out, so far as that can be done outside a detailed commentary, by Schmiedel, Scott and Gardner; and the following account will follow their discussions more or less closely with regard to the origin, purpose and nature of the most important Johannine writing.

## ORIGIN AND PURPOSE OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL

### DATE AND ORIGIN OF THE GOSPEL

The Fourth Gospel then was written in Asia Minor—probably in Ephesus—somewhere between 100 and 120 A.D. We do not know the author except in so far as his work reveals him. Nor do we know anything of the immediate occasion of his writing except by inference. He must have been one of the strongest and most prominent personalities in Asia—a Jew perhaps by birth but Christian born and bred—a man of deep and wide Christian experience, keenly interested in all Christian problems and controversies of his time.

His age saw the beginning of one of the most critical periods in the history of the Church. The new religion had become finally separated from its external historical origins. Its bonds with Judaism had been finally broken. The original Christian message had been unfolded by Paul into a far larger significance. It was surrounded by Hellenic and not Jewish culture. At the same time the Christian Church had behind it almost a century of religious experience under the influence of Jesus and Paul. All these demanded a restatement of the Christian message, and this is what the Fourth Gospel contains. It is the author's expression of his deep religious experience and his new theology to meet the needs of the age in the form of a reinterpretation of the Person of Christ and a reconstruction of Christianity.

### GENERAL NATURE OF THE GOSPEL

What he wrote, therefore, was not a Gospel in the same sense as those of Matthew, Mark and Luke. It is true that there is in the Synoptic Gospels also a certain amount of theological and apologetic purpose, but it is quite subordinate to the historical interest. In John, on the other hand, it is taken for granted that the historical

narrative is already familiar through the first three Gospels, and the interest is concentrated upon the abiding religious significance of the Living Christ for the Church. The author himself at the close of the original Gospel (xx. 30, 31, chap. xxi. being a later appendix) reveals to us his intention in writing : " Many other signs did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book : but these are written in order that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God ; and that believing ye might have life through His name." This, read in the light of the age and the Gospel itself, tells us almost everything we need to know about the general purpose of the writer. He has a practical, religious end in view, but also a theological and apologetic one. It is suggested that he wishes also to keep the Church in mind, and when we read the Epistles alongside of the Gospel we realize that he has the interests of the Church very much at heart. Finally, he wishes also to connect the permanent experience, the new theological restatement and the ' belief ' of the Church with the historical tradition—with the historical personality of Jesus. He attempts to combine into one dramatic episode Christ's revelation of Himself—through His earthly life and through His spiritual presence ; and he is confident that in such a way all the various questions in dispute in his day can be answered.

#### THE FEATURES OF THE TIME

The situation which he had to face was a complex one. On one side the Jews were carrying on a fierce crusade against Christianity, arguing that the life and death of Jesus meant nothing more than the life and punishment of an evil-doer. On the other hand were Gnostic tendencies which were inclined to make Christianity into a system of spiritual truth, denying all reality to the historical life and cutting off the Church from its root in history.

On the one hand there was a section of the Church whose attention was concentrated upon building up a rigid organization. This was in danger of becoming a

hard externalism. On the other hand were men who demanded the continuance of the freedom of the primitive age which left everything to the Spirit, though the conditions were rapidly changing.

In other senses also the time was one of transition and struggle—opposite tendencies in every direction fighting each other for life. The complexity of the situation is reflected in the Gospel, with all its contrasts and seeming contradictions. It emphasizes the historical life as a whole, but treats every particular incident simply as a mirror of eternal truth. It proclaims the spiritual nature of worship, but sometimes suggests an almost materialistic theory of the Sacraments. On one side the Evangelist has a simple, religious conception of Jesus as the moral revelation of God and the Mediator of moral and religious life to others by spiritual fellowship. On the other hand, He is the Logos who shares the life of God, which is different in essence from that of men, and which can only be shared by almost magical, miraculous means

### COMPLEX MOTIVES OF THE GOSPEL

The teacher must therefore remember in studying any section of the Fourth Gospel that there are probably several motives underlying it and crossing one another. He must be continually asking himself questions like these : What religious experience or theological idea does the author wish to express in this way ? What controversy of his own time has he got in mind ? What argument against Christianity does he wish to answer ?

He must look at each passage not as a story about Jesus, nor as part of His historical teaching, but as an attempt to express some later Christian experience or some universal Christian truth which the writer desires to emphasize ; or as an answer to some objection made to Christianity at the beginning of the second century.

The fundamental feature of the Gospel is that it is a description of the Christian religion as the author had understood and experienced it—a realization of the full and true life come to him through and in Jesus of Nazareth

from God, a real moral fellowship with the real life of God. It is the expression of a deep personal faith. Jesus reveals and communicates the life of God.

But this faith of the author with regard to the Christian religion is not only described from the point of view of his own personal experience, but also in such a way as to meet the inner needs of the Church in his time, to help it to meet the arguments of opponents and to win over the Greeks. The life and teaching of Jesus are described and interpreted in such a way as not only to explain the author's idea of the Christian religion, but also to meet as by anticipation the arguments of the Jews, to correct extreme Gnostic tendencies and to show the meaning and place of the sacraments and officers in the life and constitution of the Church.

## 3

## CONTENT AND CHARACTER OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL

### PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY OF THE GOSPEL

The whole Gospel is, in fact, the most daring attempt probably ever made to exhibit the Christian religion as the perfect, absolute and universal religion—as the revelation and communication of God and His life through Jesus Christ. It is an attempt to explain and to work out this proposition along two parallel lines, both of which are present in almost every section, but never thoroughly combined.

The first line of argument and the more evident is philosophical and theological. Jesus of Nazareth is in His person the *Logos*, eternally present with God, the one Mediator of Revelation and Life, now become real man but retaining His divine glory. He reveals God, because in His nature He is one with God. He has become man in order that He may give the life of God to men. That life being different in essence from that of men, can only be given in a semi-physical way—a miraculous almost

magical way—through giving, as it were, a part of Himself in His words and deeds and the sacraments of the Church—eating His flesh and drinking His blood.

### HISTORICAL AND RELIGIOUS ELEMENTS

The other line of argument is historical and religious. The author has had for himself real moral fellowship with the Living Christ. By a religious judgment in his experience the Jesus of history has become for him the full revelation of God. But here it is the moral sublimity of Jesus that constitutes his revelation of God—the love, the holiness, the self-sacrifice of His earthly life. Men obtain the true life by sharing in the Spirit of Jesus, identifying their will with His—in a moral and spiritual sense. It is indeed in this historical and religious line of thought that the real and permanent message of the Gospel lies. The philosophical argument is only an attempt to explain, to justify and recommend these purely moral experiences and religious truths of Christianity to the people of the time. It may be that the philosophical argument decides the particular form and even the particular content ; often, indeed, obscuring the real message of the author, but it is the deep religious experience underneath that gives permanent value to the Gospel. Everywhere the evangelist is trying to express his deep and mature experience of the marvellous moral and religious power of Jesus, under metaphysical categories which belonged to the speculative thought of his time. If he has not succeeded in thoroughly combining these two lines of thought, it is because the speculative doctrine of the Logos was not an adequate expression of the historical revelation of Jesus Christ or the truth of Christianity. It was inevitable, however, that the attempt should sometime be made, and the thinker who thus attempted to combine elements from his long religious experience, from Jewish Hellenism, from the Pauline form of Christianity and from the religious syncretism of the age, into one comprehensive picture was not lacking in moral and intellectual courage whatever may be thought of his actual failure or success.

Upon these foundations he has certainly succeeded in building the most magnificent and comprehensive structure of thought in Christian history. In the Prologue (i. 1-18) the eternal divine Logos becomes flesh—becomes man in the person of Jesus Christ. He is then brought on the scene by the witness of God's special messengers for that purpose, John the Baptist and His disciples (i. 19-51). In the first main division of the Gospel (ii.-xii.) the Logos-Jesus reveals His divine glory before the world. He is exhibited as the revealer of a new, absolute, spiritual and universal religion, far surpassing all previous revelations (ii.-iv. 42). Then He appears as the Mediator of Life, the Bread of Life, the Light of the world—as the very Life itself (iv. 43-xii. 50). Finally, in the second main division of the Gospel (xiii.-xx. 29), the Logos-Jesus reveals His divine glory to His own disciples through the teaching in the Upper Room and through His Passion and Resurrection.

### MAIN IDEAS OF THE GOSPEL

Such a bare sketch follows only one line of the author's thought. It is often crossed and recrossed by others, all of which are intended to bring out the three essential features of the Johannine life and thought, namely, that Jesus Christ is the final and universal revelation of God, that the peculiar work of Jesus was to impart Life, and that the Life is communicated through personal union with Him.

In order to express these ideas in many forms, the author has made use of the highest and most striking theological and religious thought and terminology of his time and environment. The doctrine of the Logos as the universal revealing utterance, Word, and Reason of God in the world had been a part of the richest heritage of Greek thinking since it had been employed by the Ephesian philosopher, Heraclitus, more than five centuries before. Philo had already introduced it into the world of Alexandrian Judaism. The Apostle Paul and the Epistle to the Hebrews also had made large use of the conception and many of the ideas connected with the doctrine, though without introducing the term itself.

It was through the Johannine literature that its language came definitely into Christian thought.

In words like Life, Truth, Light, knowing, seeing, abiding in God, as used in the Fourth Gospel, the writer is lavish in his use of the vocabulary of the syncretistic 'Mystery Religions' of his time and region.

The creative deed of 'John' was to bring them all to the feet of Jesus Christ, and thus to make Christianity for the first time fully and definitely express itself as a Hellenistic religion. Essentially he was following in the footsteps of Paul. The same theological framework lies at the back of both. Paul had already expressed the cosmic significance of Christ as the eternal Son of God on the one hand and as the Living Christ on the other, but with something like an interregnum between them. The Johannine Gospel developed both the pre-existent Son and the Risen Christ of Paul into more definitely Hellenistic forms than perhaps Paul's Jewish heritage allowed him to do. More than all, he inserted the Synoptic Jesus in a glorified form into the Pauline scheme and combined the whole into one complete story. He thus made it into one process of progressive revelation, which is also a process of redemption by the progressive communication of God's life through the Logos-Jesus to men.

## 4

## THE VALUE OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL

## HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GOSPEL

In this way the Fourth Gospel made effective for the first time a real alliance with Hellenistic culture. It shows the only way in which Christianity could become acclimatized in the Gentile world. The new religion inherited the results of five centuries of Hellenic thinking, and in this way found a truer expression for its own intrinsic message than Jewish thought could ever hope to give. The universality and finality of the Christian religion was thus plainly asserted for the first time, and in

it Jesus Himself was given, once and for all, His central place as its founder and its divine object.

These represent the historical significance of the Fourth Gospel—the service performed especially by its acceptance of the Logos-theology.

It must not be forgotten that this whole process involved some loss as well as great gain. The Evangelist desired to enhance the glory of Jesus by robing Him in the attributes of the Logos, and for his own age he may have done so. For our modern minds, however, the plain Synoptic narrative in which Jesus passes before us as He actually lived, leaves a far truer and grander impression of His divine character than does the Logos-Jesus of the Fourth Gospel.

On the other hand, even if the Logos-theology in the particular form here given to it has no claim to become a permanent element in Christianity, yet it gave the Johannine writer the only opportunity within his reach to express some elements in Christianity which have a permanent value. These may now, it is true, be expressed in forms which are more or less independent of the Logos-doctrine. And in the conception of the Logos itself there are elements of permanent value for Christian thought and life. More especially we cannot do without its emphasis on Revelation, and on revelation as an intelligent and an intelligible process. If we cannot assimilate the world of thought of which the Logos forms a part, yet we must find some substitute for it which will enable us to believe that the universe has a meaning, that the highest values are to be found in that meaning, and that those values are to be found with 'John' in the person of Jesus Christ. If Logos is no longer adequate for our purpose, we must find some similar but better category which will as effectively help us to find the way from Jesus into the realm of cosmic speculation, as well as from cosmic speculation back to Jesus.

#### THE ABIDING VALUE OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL

That is what this philosophy enabled the Johannine thinker to do, and that is probably why the Fourth Gospel

still appeals to us as in many ways the most modern book in the New Testament. In the Johannine message, as a whole, there are clearly many affinities with the modern mind and some elements urgently needed by the modern world :

1. Its spiritualization of God, worship, redemption and the means of salvation and its translation of Judgment, Life, Death into the realm of present experience are features of abiding value in its presentation of Christianity.

2. We need the Fourth Gospel as a reminder that our interpretation of Christianity is not full or complete without some element of speculative philosophy.

3. The mystical note has points of contact with many modern tendencies; but for Christian purposes it is necessary that it should be accompanied by the emphatic Johannine ethical interpretation of its experience.

4. Its emphasis on the abiding, spiritual, eternal significance of history is of permanent value. Its own record of the life of Jesus, it is true, is vague and fragmentary, but it asserted for all time the essential significance of the earthly life; and the Fourth Gospel is still our best teacher of how to read the eternal import of the Synoptic narratives. That is, indeed, what we must do if we wish to preserve the real Johannine message for modern use. He has taught us to find the eternal in history, but the history in which alone we can now find it is not the Johannine but the Synoptic.

5. The emphasis of the Fourth Gospel on the central place of personality is a welcome anticipation and encouragement of one of the healthiest tendencies of modern thinking. For John, the highest revelation is in the person of Jesus—in His words and works as part of Himself.

6. Finally, nowhere is such definite provision made for growth and progress. By affirming the continual presence of Jesus, the Fourth Gospel secured for Christianity a principle of inward life and ever-fresh development. His living Spirit is always there to guide His disciples into all truth.

With elements like these as essential parts of its

thought and life, the Fourth Gospel, in spite of some features which we shall have occasion to notice later on, must always provide a source of inspiration and guidance for every age so long as Christianity exists. What gives all these their power is the fact that behind them is the personal testimony of a profound religious spirit, expressing in the language of a given time the truths that were vital to his Christian faith.

## 5

## THE FOURTH GOSPEL IN MODERN INSTRUCTION

## DIFFICULTIES OF TEACHING THE FOURTH GOSPEL

The task of teaching the Fourth Gospel in practice is certainly as great as that of tracing its origin and interpreting its character adequately. It is the ripest fruit of the ripest experience and thinking in early Christianity. It attempts to fuse together so many elements of very different kinds and extremely difficult to harmonize. It is intimately interwoven with the peculiarities, needs and interests of one definite age—and that one of the most varied and most complicated periods in the history of the ancient world. The result is that its universe of life and thought is even more foreign to us than that of the Apostle Paul.

It is doubtful also whether we are yet ready to appreciate and absorb the peculiar influence upon the growth of Christian character and personality which the full Johannine message can and ought to exercise. It may be that its hour is not yet come, for it reaches up to heights still largely unscaled except by one here and there. Nowhere in the New Testament does the Christian type of life and thought appear in so naked an ideal form nor one so full of uncharted possibilities. Education, however, is the natural home of ideals, and the richer their possibilities the warmer must always be their welcome by the teacher.

It may be well, therefore, at the outset to enumerate

some of the particular difficulties which must inevitably be met in any serious attempt to teach the Fourth Gospel ; and the mere enumeration of them ought to be enough to convince any experienced teacher or educational thinker of the futility and absurdity of giving it any early place in the curriculum.

#### GOSPEL MUST BE TAUGHT AS A WHOLE

1. The primary difficulty, as we have seen, arises from the general character and content of the Gospel as an attempt to reconstruct Christianity, and especially Christian thought, in terms of Hellenistic religion and theology. We are asked to assimilate and to make real to the mind a whole new universe in a more or less consistent form. This means that particular passages find their meaning in their full context. Whole sections at least, if not the whole Gospel, must be used connectedly as part of the same study. In this respect as in others it differs fundamentally from the Synoptic Gospels which largely consist of more or less loose collections of incidents and sayings. Within the general sphere of the life of Jesus, these can be legitimately treated separately. In 'John,' on the other hand, the main point of an incident is missed if it is not kept within its own context in the Gospel. If, for instance, the incident at the Pool of Bethesda (v. 1-18) were Synoptic it might form the subject of an independent study, but as it is in 'John,' such a treatment would be fatal to its meaning and value. It is an essential element in that whole section of the Gospel which extends from iv. 43 to v. 47, in which the author exhibits Jesus as the Mediator of Life. This he does by means of two incidents meant to be interpreted allegorically—the healing of the nobleman's son (iv. 43-54) and this miracle at the Pool of Bethesda (v. 1-18). These, however, find their point in the discourse which follows them (v. 19-47).

The writer therefore simply uses this incident as one element in an attempt to reveal a Christian truth. Throughout the whole section the message of the writer is that the Christian religion means moral and spiritual

health and life in freedom from the bondage of the Law ; and that the Mediator of that Life and Freedom is Jesus in whose Person the Life dwells because He is one with God.

### ITS ALLEGORICAL METHOD

2. This already brings us face to face with another of the main difficulties arising from the general method of the Evangelist. That method is allegorical throughout. The outward incident in each case is only the garment of a spiritual truth. It is specially chosen and sometimes definitely adapted for the purpose of expressing that truth. The incidents therefore are not even parables like those of the Good Samaritan or the Prodigal Son in the Synoptics, the meaning and message of which is in the story itself, which in its turn does not need a special key to the interpretation of each part. The only element in the Johannine allegories which remains constant and always itself is Jesus. The moral or spiritual counterpart of all the other elements must be substituted for each one before the incident can be interpreted. In the discourse that follows every group of incidents, the writer usually points to or at least suggests the proper substitute. Thus the incident of turning the water into wine is part of a section which expresses the contrast between Christianity and the two older religions of the Jews and the Samaritans ; and the point of the narrative does not appear until Judaism is actually substituted for the water and Christianity for the wine.

This allegorical method thus involves the frequent passage from one universe of discourse to another—the development of old forms into new truths—giving a new meaning to old words and continual up-to-date preaching in the form of history—all involving the most difficult of all methods to disentangle. It needs no words, therefore, to realize that to teach effectively a message expressed in this form is a matter of great difficulty and delicacy. It is possible, of course, to deal with such incidents superficially as if they were simply historical incidents in the life of Jesus. By doing so, however, we are only grasping the shadow and losing the substance ; and we are, moreover,

throwing the whole framework and record of the Synoptics into hopeless confusion.

### OTHER DIFFICULT FEATURES

3. Another fundamental feature of the Fourth Gospel arises from the fact that throughout it is 'John' who is speaking through Jesus, or, as might be said with more justice, it is always the Living Christ speaking through 'John.' A discourse that is started nominally by Jesus often becomes before its end a direct deliverance by the writer of the Gospel. The whole Gospel is in a way a monologue. That is characteristic of the whole method, and makes the task of teaching very difficult and intricate.

4. Out of these features arise many less fundamental aspects of the Gospel, which make the task of the teacher still more aggravating when it is seriously undertaken. The thoughts and ideas are formulated in abstract and stereotyped forms; the themes are general; the treatment is often monotonous in form and content, and there is a good deal of repetition which is difficult to make in any way interesting. Over the whole Gospel also there broods a spirit of inevitableness and fate which must accompany any attempt to express the present in terms of the past.

All these features must naturally make the task of teaching and assimilating the whole Johannine message a supreme intellectual and spiritual effort and the final triumph of a Christian intelligence and faith.

All this points quite unmistakably to one thing, namely, that the teaching of the Fourth Gospel as such belongs to no earlier a period than very late adolescence, on the verge of maturity. Nothing but mischief can come from any attempt to employ it for educational purposes during childhood or even early adolescence—except in very fragmentary ways, which are always in danger of doing radical injustice to the Johannine Gospel and its essential message. The most that we can hope to do during these periods is to prepare the way for a later study.

## THE FOURTH GOSPEL IN CHILDHOOD

In childhood and adolescence, therefore, we must be content with deliberately exploiting some fragments of the Johannine material and with preparing the way for a later attempt to deal with it as a whole.

## SUMMARY STATEMENTS OF TRUTH

There is, indeed, one feature of the Fourth Gospel that seems to lend itself naturally to our use in the earlier stages of religious education. There is no literature which shows such a capacity to crystallize some of the most important features of Christianity and Christian life into a brief, striking and almost proverbial statement and form of words. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life"; "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work." "If any man will to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Such sayings as these, and many others that might be quoted, are unforgettable, universal summaries of the life and spirit of Jesus, and such summaries have their necessary place in the process of instruction. By their means a whole series of incidents or aspects of truth can be indelibly impressed upon the mind if transmitted at the appropriate time after their content has already been concretely pictured. They can fruitfully be employed in connection with the Synoptic narratives as summaries of their moral and spiritual meaning. Filled with a Synoptic content, given beforehand, they will be fixed in the memory and become part of the treasure of life. Naturally, it must not be forgotten that by this use of them we are exploiting the Johannine literature for Synoptic or modern purposes—a course which is not

without its dangers, and which may need some justification in each particular case. We have already pointed out in a previous chapter that the gain, in some cases at least, is greater than the loss in scientific exegesis.

### HISTORICAL FRAGMENTS

The only other possibility of using the Johannine material before adolescence is well advanced depends upon the view taken of the historical value of some incidents in the Fourth Gospel of which we find no trace in the Synoptic Gospels. It is certain that there are fragments of the authentic history of Jesus preserved in 'John' alone. Whether, however, these can still be recognized and rescued for the teaching of history is somewhat doubtful.

There are also in the Fourth Gospel some attractive and dramatic human touches—such as that of Jesus sitting thirsty and weary at the well; fragments of parables such as that of the shepherd leading his sheep; and suggestions of incidents such as that of the people seeking to make Jesus King. If these could be incorporated legitimately into the narrative of the life of Jesus, it would be well worth the trouble of doing so. In any case, however, to be of value they must be taken entirely out of their Johannine context and made consonant with the Synoptic spirit as well as the Synoptic narrative.

It may well be that some suggestions such as these might be seriously considered by the teacher so long as he knows what he is doing. Some points of contact with the Fourth Gospel might thus be found even in the early stages of education.

### THE BACKGROUND OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL

To prepare the way for a later study of the Johannine life and thought will in any case be a necessary and very fruitful part of the teacher's work during the

earlier stages of adolescence. This preparation ought to take several forms—literary, historical, religious and philosophical.

### PREPARATORY STUDIES

1. Some elementary introduction to the Johannine literature and its history should naturally form part of a study of the origin, character and history of the New Testament writings.

2. More to our purpose would be a series of historical and missionary studies of Christianity during the period from about 60 to 120 A.D. in the Province of Asia. This would form the continuation of Paul's activity in Ephesus, such as has hitherto been missing in the ordinary studies of the background of the literature of the New Testament. It would bring into prominence some elements in the life and thought of the Roman Empire which are becoming more and more necessary for the adequate interpretation of many parts of the New Testament besides the Johannine literature.

Asia was in many ways the very centre of the world's life, and towards the end of the century was fast becoming a Christian country. Paul had made Ephesus the centre of his mission for several years, and here his influence was felt most of all. Whoever 'John' was, he represents some significant personalities and movements in Asia, engaged in active Christian propaganda for the purpose of consolidating the work of Paul and winning the great cities of Asia for Christ and His Gospel. For the adequate interpretation of the Johannine writings, some picture of the historical and religious situation in Asia must be given—its city life, its political and religious federation of the cities, its passionate loyalty to the Empire and its ideals, its touch with the primitive nature-cults of the Hinterland, the influence of the Oriental cults, the origin and spread of the worship of Cæsar, its tradition of Hellenic philosophy in characteristic forms, as well as the material prosperity due to its position and energy and its intimate touch with the whole Mediterranean world.

## HISTORICAL AND RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

Ephesus was for a long time the great centre of Christianity, and a great deal of Christian life and literature was intimately connected with Asia. In addition to the Johannine a great deal of the New Testament literature issued from Asia or was first directed thither. First Corinthians was written from Ephesus, while First Peter, Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, were first read there. Polycarp, Ignatius, Montanus, Papias, as well as Pliny, have intimate connections with Asia and the surrounding regions.

To call attention to the situation of the Christian Church and its many complicated problems in this special region at the end of the first and the beginning of the second century would be a solid contribution to the task of teaching the New Testament. The Church was already in possession of the two great presentations of Christ represented by the historical picture of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels on the one hand, and by the worship of the Risen Lord in Paul on the other hand. Neither gave a complete or satisfactory account of the Christian faith. Gnostic and Docetic tendencies in the syncretistic thought of the Hellenistic world were beginning to disintegrate one or both of them, and the Church could not afford to lose either. There was urgent need of finding some way from the concrete Jesus into the cosmic philosophy of the time or *vice versa*. Within the Church itself the struggle was beginning between the free and prophetic forms of 'enthusiasm' which had marked the first period and the need for a more stable organization and federation.

These and a number of other urgent problems could not be solved without a far more thorough attempt than had hitherto been made to fuse the disparate elements in the growing life and thought of the Church into a comprehensive reconstruction of Christianity. The only attempt of this kind which has come down to us is represented by the Johannine literature. Its only serious rival must be found in the Gnostic speculations which ran the serious danger of losing the peculiar Christian faith

in the universal religious and intellectual syncretism of the Hellenistic world.

3. Sometime also an attempt must be made to prepare the way for the understanding and appreciation of the Johannine doctrine of the Logos and the characteristic Johannine use of such terms as Life, Truth and Light. At least three different ways of doing this might be tentatively suggested :

### THE DOCTRINE OF THE LOGOS

(a) The previous use of the conception of the Logos and the term might be traced in an elementary way—in Greek philosophy generally from Heraclitus downwards, and especially its particular application by the Stoics and in different centres of Hellenistic thought, its relation to the use of *Wisdom* in the Old Testament and Judaism, its use by Philo of Alexandria, the introduction of the conception without the term into Christian thought by Paul and the writer to the Hebrews, until ' John ' formally adopts it as his own. This, of course, is a difficult task and requires a good deal of consideration and study on the part of the teacher.

(b) It might be possible, too, to begin at the other end and to make the understanding of the Logos philosophy somewhat easier by drawing upon the use of such terms as principles and category, laws of nature and evolution, spirit, world-soul and universal reason, by modern scientists, philosophers and men of letters. Such terms do express in some way or other the conviction that the universe is intelligible and has meaning at the back of it and in it. They serve as landmarks on the way from the individual and the concrete into the realm of cosmic speculation. In some such way as this the capable teacher, starting from some of the more familiar generalizing terms of our own day, might lead his pupils back to some aspects of the Logos philosophy, and thus contribute to the better appreciation of the essential Johannine message that the fundamental meaning of the universe is to be found in Jesus Christ, which is what the

author intended to convey by his adoption of the conception of the Logos.

### TERMINOLOGY OF THE MYSTERY RELIGIONS

(c) In the body of the Fourth Gospel, Jesus Christ, the Logos of the preface, becomes also the Life, the Truth and the Light of the world. For the understanding of such terms as these and such others as 'hear,' 'see,' 'abide,' which are so characteristic of the Fourth Gospel, we need some study of the 'Mystery Religions' of the time and of the ideas and terms which they helped to create and fix during the first centuries of our era. As a preliminary study of Pharisaism has been found necessary for the adequate appreciation of Paul's theological ideas and vocabulary, so we are beginning to realize that a knowledge of the syncretistic Mystery Cults, travelling from East to West side by side with Christianity, is necessary for the adequate understanding of the Johannine writings, which are saturated with their ideas and vocabulary.

Unfortunately, however, the study of the religious life of the Hellenistic world in this respect is still only in its infancy. Probably for some time to come the teacher will be provided with but very inadequate materials for the study of the genesis and history of many perplexing elements in the Johannine thought and language. What he needs especially to realize is that such studies as these will be necessary for a full appreciation of the Johannine life and thought.

### THE FOURTH GOSPEL IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

#### THE JOHANNINE LIFE AND THOUGHT

It is not at all certain that a connected study of such a daring and comprehensive reconstruction of Christianity as 'John' represents can ever become an ordinary part

of the general instruction of all youth or even of all Christians. As in all 'mystical' forms of religion, there are in it elements which will never and can never become part of the common inheritance of mankind. The typically Johannine form of Christianity makes its full appeal—at present at least—to only one type of capacity, experience and temperament. It is indeed worth considering whether it is not a truth of some educational significance that the three great types of Christian life and thought in the New Testament really represent more or less permanent types of Christian experience—a Synoptic, a Pauline and a Johannine type of experience—that they have to be developed each on its own lines and that the literature of the other types will only make a very partial appeal to each.

In any case, the great task of the teacher will be to pursue such a study of the Johannine writings and background as will enable him and his pupils to pass through their particular forms intelligently and sympathetically, in such a way as to come face to face with the great moral and religious power and experience often hidden underneath the peculiar Johannine forms. Thus only can be assimilated those elements in the Fourth Gospel which are of permanent and universal value for the growth and progress of the common Christian life and thought—its combination of history and faith, of personality and principle; its urge towards an ethical and religious interpretation of the universe; its emphasis on the reality of revelation; its conception of revelation as an intelligent and intelligible process and as accomplished through personality; its principle of freedom and progress; and, most of all, its emphasis upon the person of Jesus Christ as the key to the fundamental meaning of the universe and the indispensable Mediator of the divine life.

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## CHAPTER XIV

### JESUS CHRIST AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

1. *The Variety and Unity of the New Testament.*—The Twofold Process of Education—The Variety of the New Testament—Its Unity—Three Main Types of Thought—Freedom of Interpretation—Creating Joy in the Gospel.
2. *The Triumphs and Failures of Christianity.*—The Ancient and the Mediæval World—Transition to the Modern World.
3. *The Modern Situation and its Meaning.*—The Needs and Tasks of the Modern World—The Essence of the Modern Struggle.
4. *The Personal and Social Ideal of the Gospel.*—Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God—Different Expressions of the Ideal—Value of the Historical Picture of Jesus—The Contributions of Paul and John.
5. *The New Testament Demand.*—The Gospel Complete in Principle—The New Testament limited in the Application of the Gospel.
6. *The Christian Church in the Modern World.*—The Gospel needs the Church—The Church and the Gospel for the World's Needs.

### I

#### THE VARIETY AND UNITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

IT has been the aim of the previous chapters to provide some introduction to a much-needed systematic discussion of the value of the New Testament in and for modern instruction and education.

#### A TWOFOLD PROCESS

Any such discussion must continually keep in mind the fact that all real education involves a twofold process. On the one hand, it means the effective transmission to a new generation of those 'values' which have already

been revealed in the history of the race. The significant past has its own inherent rights, and mankind can only be effectively educated along the lines of the ideals which have grown out of its own history and experience.

On the other hand, the present and the future have their own imperative claims, far more urgent indeed than those of the past. History, however great, cannot be allowed to tyrannize over life.

Essentially, therefore, we have had before us two questions. In what sense and to what extent is the New Testament a significant record of the past of humanity, and how far does it incorporate 'values' which are worth preserving and reproducing in every new generation? In what sense and to what extent is the New Testament capable of responding to the claims of the modern world for an adequate answer to its needs and for power to meet its heavy tasks?

Closely connected as these two questions must always be, it may be well to gather together separately some of the general results that seem to emerge from our discussions from these two points of view.

### THE VARIETY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

It is no small task to make the writings of the New Testament intelligible and interesting at the present day in order to transmit the central ideals and values, or what we have already called the Gospel, which these writings reveal.

One of its primary conditions is that we should be allowed and are able to pass beyond the written word to the moral and spiritual movement which created it and to the living experiences of the men who created the movement. The first step is to make the history of early Christianity intelligible through the writings and any other means within our reach; and so at the same time to make the writings themselves interesting because of the men behind them.

In this way alone are we able to do justice to the rich variety of the New Testament in its presentation of the Christian ideals, in the appeals it makes on their behalf, in the circumstances and actual situations it attempts

to meet, and in the personalities who represent these Christian ideals. This variety, as we have seen, has its own peculiar educational value.

### THE UNITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

We cannot rest content with this, however, for we cannot be said to have appreciated adequately the message of the New Testament until we have worked our way through its variety into its unity. For educational purposes especially, we need, not simply an unconnected series of ideals, but some unified *system* of ideals or some living centre out of which they spring spontaneously. We have already discussed the kind of unity to be found in the New Testament from several points of view and in several forms.

We are always driven back beyond the several books of the New Testament with their various ideas and doctrines to their different writers. Beyond these, with their differing experiences and activities, we are driven to the underlying purpose, life and spirit common to them all. This is incorporated in its purest form in the message, work and personality of Jesus of Nazareth, in His life with the Father, His life and death for men, in His preaching of the Kingdom of God. This is the Gospel out of which the New Testament sprang, in which it finds its unity and for the sake of which it still exists. This spirit of life follows us like a pervading presence throughout the pages of the New Testament, though there is nowhere anything like a systematic analysis of the ideals and values incorporated in it and created by it. Such an analysis adequate for all time has never yet been found and is probably impossible. This spirit is a centre of such rich possibilities that each age has taken from it according to the need of the time, and left the rest for other ages to explore.

### THREE MAIN TYPES OF LIFE AND THOUGHT

What we do find in the New Testament is the expression of this essential Christian Gospel in many different

forms, in the terms of different situations and in answer to different needs. These may legitimately be reduced to three, namely, that of the Synoptic Gospels, of Paul and of the Johannine writings, though there are one or two others (especially that of the Epistle to the Hebrews) which come very near to these in their significance.

It forms a great part of the task of the teacher of the New Testament to give as clear an historical picture as possible, from the material at his disposal, of these presentations in their differences as well as in their similarities.

For both apologetic and educative purposes, it is well that men should realize that Christianity is not bound to any one presentation of Christ. Since the days of the New Testament there have been numberless others. A clear knowledge of the characteristic features of as many of them as possible will materially contribute to the healthy conviction that the Christian Gospel is of such a character that it demands continual and progressive incarnation, reinterpretation and analysis. Temperament, education, interest and need have had their say, will have their say and must be allowed to exercise freely their legitimate influence upon the expression of the Gospel.

#### FREEDOM OF INTERPRETATION

There are genuine interpretations of the Gospel not only in terms of Jesus Himself, but also of God and of the conscience. Sometimes it is the historical element that has been central, sometimes the ethical and sometimes the purely religious. Now it has taken almost exclusively personal forms and then been predominantly social in its expression. To some, *ideal* has seemed the one word to express its peculiarity. To others, its *power* has been all in all. Some have seen its truth, others its beauty and others its goodness. Every interpretation has been conditioned by some actual situation, and consciously or unconsciously has been designed to meet it. They are one and all naturally incomplete, but they are all justifiable and necessary to the full life of the Gospel. Through their partial conflict of emphasis no less than

through their recognition of one another and their co-operation, we may in the end come to some consensus of judgment upon the value and content of the whole personality of Jesus Christ and its personal and social, ethical, religious and philosophical implications. It is examples and illustrations of the most typical of such interpretations that we get in the New Testament. In Jesus Himself they are all more than fulfilled, and the Christian teacher must never be satisfied with merely transmitting a particular interpretation of Jesus, but must always press forward to the point where His pupils will be compelled by their own personal knowledge of the Master to work out their own appreciation and interpretation of Him. We cannot teach the New Testament adequately without realizing that its power and meaning lie in a living spirit incorporated in an historical personality, with whom every man must come into personal communion—a personality who will make his own terms with heart and mind and will—with the conscience of each disciple. The value of every interpretation lies in the help it can give to find the point of closest contact between Jesus and each scholar. That is the end and aim of teaching the New Testament.

We ought not to find it so difficult as we do to make its Gospel intelligible and interesting to the modern mind when we consider the many concrete, dramatic, experimental, ethical, religious, intellectual and personal forms in which so many aspects of it are presented to us in the New Testament and elsewhere. All our many hopes will certainly be disappointed if we do not succeed in making it both intelligible and interesting to the youth of to-day.

### CREATING JOY IN THE GOSPEL

It may be worth while emphasizing the fact that any teaching of the New Testament which does not create an increasing interest and an overflowing gladness in the hearts of our pupils must mean failure of several kinds. It is failure from the point of view of effective education. It is a greater failure from the point of view of the New Testament itself, for it fails to represent and

to transmit one of the central elements in the early Christian life and writings. The note of the gladness of rejoicing rings through every part of the New Testament. It is one of its characteristic marks. It is especially necessary, too, that there should be happy memories of the hours of Biblical instruction. To associate them with dulness and weariness has for long been one of our grievous sins against the spirit of youth.

How, therefore, to arouse genuine interest and joy in the things of the Gospel should be a problem constantly occupying the attention of the teacher, and he must not be tempted to imagine that it can be solved by any external tricks and dodges. Naturally, it goes without saying that there must be elements of interest in the form and mode of the presentation itself. Much more important than this, however, is it that the content of the lessons should of itself be interesting.

What is of essential, permanent interest, is what does actually supply a need already felt, while whatever is intimately connected with that easily becomes interesting by association. If this process be thought out, it will be seen that in order to make the New Testament educationally effective, the teacher must come to it not only as a record of the past and its values, which he desires to transmit, but also from that other side which was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. He must, that is, come to the New Testament acutely conscious of the imperative needs and demands of modern life, and supremely confident that in the early history of Christianity he has found a definite and significant contribution of supreme value for the satisfaction of those needs.

A discussion, therefore, of the place of the New Testament in modern education is not complete without some attempt to describe the character and extent of the contribution which the New Testament is capable of making towards the production of an ideal and of the power of enforcing it, which are adequate in content for the satisfaction of the real needs of the modern life and world and which are sufficient in inspiration for the performance of its great and difficult tasks.

## THE TRIUMPHS AND FAILURES OF CHRISTIANITY

### THE ANCIENT AND MEDIÆVAL WORLD

It is of its social needs that the modern world is most conscious, and it is by standards of social adequacy that it is most apt to judge men and movements. We are only just beginning to learn effectively that the personal and social problems of humanity are essentially inter-dependent and can only be solved together. In all teaching it is, therefore, necessary to appreciate the fact that the easiest and most certain point of contact with men to-day lies in their social life, interests and needs.

The question of the specifically modern value of the New Testament must, as a consequence, become first of all one of its social power ; and it cannot be intelligently discussed without some brief reference to the way in which the present social situation has arisen and what Christianity has already done to meet and overcome similar crises in the past.

There are many defects and failures which may with justice be set down against the Christian Church in its account with the world as a whole. It must, however, be granted that at two at least of the severest crises through which Europe has yet passed, it was the Christian Church and the Christian faith which came to its rescue.

In the disintegration of the ancient world it was mainly by means of Christianity that it became possible to transmit the rich heritage of that world to the Europe of the Middle Ages and thence to modern times. On the ruins of the old, it was mainly the Church that created a new world and a new civilization so well built and so strong as to last for many centuries under its own careful and minute moral and spiritual guardianship. The Church was strong enough to dominate the life it had created, but it did so in such a way and to such an extent that its authority became a tyranny impossible for men to endure.

Later on, it was a revival of Christian faith within the Church itself that at last broke the domination of Rome over Europe, and one of the main elements in that revival was the direct power of the New Testament. This time, however, the Protestantism which gave the main impetus to the transformation of the Middle Ages into the modern world failed in the end to maintain its moral and spiritual authority over the life which it had so helped to create. It allowed and even encouraged the creation and growth of great Sovereign States, a world-wide capitalistic system of Industry which, as Troeltsch says, "has power to increase production of a kind almost indefinitely, mobilizing the whole world for labour and mechanizing man as well as labour."

#### TRANSITION TO THE MODERN WORLD

The Church failed utterly to control the political and economic forces it had let loose. They crushed their own ruthless way over the bodies and souls of men, carrying with them and in their service the unparalleled discoveries of modern science, the triumphs of modern education and even the benediction of the Churches themselves. They went their own way, it is true, in utter defiance of the too feeble attempts of Christian teachers to inculcate a sense of personal responsibility in the rich and the strong who profited ; to preach the duty of charitable love for the poor and the weak who were being crushed to death ; to prohibit luxury and the mad rush for pleasure ; and to denounce the Mammonism which was the natural result of the political and economic system. It is true that a certain type of Democracy and Liberalism grew out of the industrial Revolution, but it was a merely rationalistic and utilitarian freedom and democracy which was not only very limited in its range but also very insecure in its foundation. We can now see that the Church failed almost completely to supply the industrial and political system with the necessary ethical and religious spirit, which were absolutely necessary in order to avoid its serious dangers, and which the system was naturally incapable of generating out of its own

life. These dangers have long ago developed into grim realities and have now become manifest to all men in a world-wide catastrophe, of which the Great War itself was only a symptom. The revolt of man, partly under the influence of such radical reinterpretations of the New Testament as that of Tolstoy, against the machinery of profit and power has already become a revolution in many parts of the world, and it is to be hoped that there is still enough of life's energy left in the peoples everywhere to wage a successful 'root-and-branch' crusade against the whole idea of a world divided out between a few great sovereign military States and of a world-wide industrial system built up on a materialistic and capitalistic basis. What the methods of doing so will be ; whether the values of the old world shall be transmitted to the new ; and whether indeed a new cosmos can be created out of the present chaos remains to be seen. It will depend largely upon whether Christianity and the Church have sufficient moral and spiritual energy to repeat in a better and more spiritual way what they did with Europe at least twice before—but without repeating their failures in those cases. That again depends largely upon whether the Church is capable of handling the Word of God in the New Testament aright.

## 3

## THE MODERN SITUATION AND ITS MEANING

## THE MODERN TASKS AND NEEDS

That Christianity is now facing a new and an infinitely more difficult and more complicated situation than ever before is a point that need not be laboured. For the first time in its history it is face to face with a world-crisis and not a local one. All the previous efforts of the Church seem only child's play compared with the problems before Christianity at present. Catastrophic as it was, the European War has made no essential change in the situation. It has changed only some of the external conditions and cleared out of the way some of the stage-

properties which were hiding from men the brutality and sordidness of the grim struggle for life always going on behind the scenes. It has only made personal problems especially more acute and urgent, and revealed to every eye the naked framework around which the outward structure of the old society was jerry-built.

The main question for us is what does the new generation need in order to reconstruct its personal and social world almost from the foundations? What specific help can Christianity and the Church give in order to supply those needs effectively and honourably?

Amidst all its multitudinous plans, it is plain that the world is almost bankrupt of clear ideas and dominant principles, of strong convictions and moral and spiritual ideals. Some fragments and remnants of values it has probably rescued from its past, and perhaps bled out of its recent experiences. But even these lie in a confused heap and need to be arranged, classified and completed in order to become the nucleus of a faith. To what extent can the Church help men to do even this work and baptize with the Holy Spirit of power these fragmentary and broken lights of convictions and ideals?

#### THE CHURCH AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

So far as has yet appeared, the Christian Church has in its spiritual possession or under its moral guardianship nothing much except the New Testament worth offering to men and nations for the purpose of building up a new world. And even that, before it can be given effectively to the world, needs to be reread, marked and inwardly digested by the Church itself. The Church as well as the world needs to be educated into it. Perhaps the most serious question of the day is whether it is a gift still worth the giving, and whether it is worth while consecrating the energies of the whole Church to the task of educating itself and the world into the spirit and principles of the New Testament.

It is certainly true that the New Testament is the peculiar heritage of the Church and needs the Church in some form for its effective propagation. Indeed, one

of the most courageous things ever done by the Christian Church was to set the New Testament in its very midst as the final standard and judge of its life—shamed though the Church has continually been by its very presence. The question is, has the Church the courage still to believe whole-heartedly in the New Testament Gospel and to teach it in its fulness and purity? And if the Church has sufficient faith to let the New Testament have its own revolutionary way with men, to what extent can the New Testament still supply the deep needs of men and the world at the present time?

There is only one answer to this question, and that is—better than ever. The needs of the world have now more than ever come within the range of its essential Gospel. The points of contact between those needs and the peculiar message and power of the New Testament are closer than they ever were. It is not only that the Gospel because of its specifically ethical and spiritual purpose and content can take the suffering human race and with unerring finger probe each ailing spot. It is also the case that the very process through which the mind and heart of the world seems to be passing is the typical movement represented in the New Testament. Moreover, the main ideals, the remnants of which the world is weakly trying to rescue from the ruins of its past, and the spiritual convictions for which it is groping, are the very ideals, values and convictions which the New Testament expresses most clearly and incorporates most powerfully. They are those which make up its essence and reveal its peculiar character most thoroughly and fully among the faiths of the world.

#### ESSENCE OF THE MODERN STRUGGLE

A very brief consideration of what seems to be happening all around us may help to make this clear. If the world is not destined to go to pieces altogether, it is now growing out of an individualistic period and is groping after a new communal reconstruction of its life. We are witnessing the struggle between these two ideals both in the hearts and minds of men and in the life of the world

at large. The latter is the hope of the future and the former is the heritage of the past. The two principles are at enmity because they are at present both held in crude and imperfect forms. Men are, however, everywhere vaguely conscious that both the free personality and the ordered human community are necessary. The political and economic period which has already reached and passed its climax encouraged the growth of personal freedom and individual initiative in its own way and for its own purpose. But within a capitalistic system this ideal was bound in the end to starve for lack of sustenance, for it was cut off from its base in the moral and religious conviction of the supreme value of every individual before God. Nevertheless, in a mutilated form it did somehow represent an ideal necessary for human welfare.

The co-operative principle, on the other hand, is at present being forced upon us simply by the logic of external events, and the world is attempting to give it a body without a life-giving spirit and soul. That soul it can only find in moral conviction and a religious faith as universal as the co-operative commonwealth it seeks to establish.

## 4

### THE PERSONAL AND SOCIAL IDEAL OF THE GOSPEL

The future will largely depend upon whether men can find a larger and more powerful ideal which will not only purify and complete both these values, but also help to hold them together side by side, and still more to combine them essentially and in principle.

#### THE IDEALS OF THE GOSPEL

Our interpretation of the New Testament has been a failure if it has not revealed the fact that this is the very heart of its Gospel and its power—expressed in many different forms, but found in all its classical presentations in the New Testament. Everywhere it implies and

demands the moral freedom and independence of the individual for the sake of the healthy growth of the human community ; and the creation of a universal community for the sake of the healthy growth of the free moral personality. It is a synthesis of freedom and obedience, a personal appeal and the social call of love. We have already seen in how many ways this combination may be and has been expressed.

In the Christian Gospel, also, these two ideals are not simply loosely held side by side, but united in principle on the basis of the universal Fatherhood of God. Both its supreme valuation of personality and its idea of a universal community become thus absolutely indestructible.

It is mainly for this reason that a central place in the present and future education of the race can be vindicated for the New Testament as the classical record of this Gospel. It sets before the eyes of men an ideal for their personal and social life which stands above and beyond all the accidents of time and place—an intrinsic value within which all other values worth preserving can find their place as instrumental to its ends.

This is the main thing, for the sake of which we have a right to use the New Testament. It is, however, very probable that once we have learnt to use it so, the New Testament will also bring us what may still remain as the most universal and appropriate expression of these values in the personality of the Lord Jesus Christ on the one hand and His message of the Kingdom of God on the other hand ; while the peculiar contributions of the different parts of the New Testament towards the explication and application of this ideal will help to clarify and fill out its meaning. We may even find in the New Testament before the end many suggestions for its progressive realization as well as many warnings of the dangers to which it is exposed in its struggles for incorporation in actual life.

It is true that terms like the Lord Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God have a long history and come to us with many associations which we have no desire to preserve, but they are still probably the least soiled of all

the terms into which historical ideals have been precipitated, and also those that will continue to make the most direct and powerful appeal to men.

### JESUS CHRIST AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Their history has in many ways enriched and purified their content and widened their scope, but they still retain in the minds of men an essential contact and continuity with their meaning in the New Testament. This is very much more so in their case than with regard to such categories as John's Logos or Paul's Son of God or the Synoptic Messiah. The Lordship of Jesus Christ is much more capable of having poured into it a modern content in line with its essential New Testament meaning, than any other historical description of Jesus.

It is true that an interpretation to meet modern needs must be much more exclusively in terms of personality, moral character and moral authority than is the case in any New Testament presentation of Him. The New Testament itself, however, provides us with plenty of material for doing so, especially in the Synoptic Gospels.

The modern associations of the Kingdom of God are also, of course, far more evolutionary, secular and human than are its associations in the New Testament; but for the most part these new associations do no injustice to its essential purpose and spirit. The New Testament itself clearly suggests them in many ways, and points to the transformation of the primitive crude catastrophic eschatology into a permanent and continuous divine guidance culminating periodically in critical episodes. The idea of the future Kingdom of God may have been sometimes used in the New Testament and later in order to deny and to devalue human effort and the ordinary work of the world, but that is no part of its essential motive or content. In itself it is the final realization of the Eternal in time, and part, at least, of its intention is to quicken the powers and efforts of men, and to strengthen their souls to endure long waiting in the certain faith that there is a final, absolute meaning and purpose in all

human effort and work. In it the life to come becomes the energizing spirit of the present time.

### DIFFERENT EXPRESSIONS OF THE IDEAL

We may express our ultimate ideal in many ways—in personal and social categories, in educational, political and economic terms, borrowed from the philosophers of Greece, or the Hebrew prophets, created by modern science or philosophy ; but it does not seem that we have yet found any categories so capable of becoming the bearers of all that our ultimate personal and social ideals can and ought to mean for us as those produced by the experience behind the New Testament and incorporated in the Lord Jesus Christ and His message of the Kingdom of God. No others are so comprehensive and so adaptable. No others have carried with them and in them so many of the intrinsic values of the past and are so full of possibilities for the future. The Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of man, love, freedom, the Church, the Commonwealth of nations, Socialism, and a host of others have their peculiar merits for certain particular purposes, but they all in some degree or other lack the fulness, or attractive power, or the touch with universal humanity, or the definiteness which should stamp the bearers of the ultimate values and ideals of the human race. It is certain that the Lord Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God have struck and do strike a note of appeal to many more hearts, minds and consciences than any other words in human history.

### VALUE OF THE HISTORICAL PICTURE OF JESUS

The very terms themselves suggest that the element in the New Testament which the world at present needs, and with which it has already most points of contact, is to be found in the Synoptic Gospels. The characteristic thing about the Synoptic presentation is not its theology nor even its religious faith, but the fact that it has preserved the historical picture of Jesus Christ, the moral appreciation of His human greatness, and His insistent

proclamation of the Kingdom of God. Historically there can be very little doubt that the Church would soon have been overwhelmed in the Christological controversies if the ineradicable picture of Jesus Christ had not always called men back to sober reality, and if that real Jesus had not continually of Himself shown men the way into the Kingdom of God.

And to-day, again, it would seem as if almost the only hope for the world's life is to make the historical Jesus real to men—Himself and His Kingdom of God as one whole. That is, indeed, almost the only point of genuine and spontaneous contact between Christianity and the majority of men. The comprehensive report of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Committee on the religion of the British Army in France<sup>1</sup> is sufficient evidence of that fact. Church, Creed and Ritual have lost their power. There is left, we are told, besides the very vague background of religion, only some reverence for the figure of Jesus.

It is evident, therefore, that in order to supply the need of the time, we have to start where the life behind the New Testament starts, namely, with the attempt to renew effectively a personal familiarity with Jesus as the Friend and Teacher of men. Our dealing must be, first of all, frankly and wholeheartedly with the human Jesus, and we must build up an historical picture worthy of their reverence in the minds and hearts of men. We can do it with the certain hope that that, as of old, will exercise its wonted charm and power, leading men on gradually to the reconstruction of Christian thinking, and in the end guiding their personal and social action.

This is not only what men at present most need, but this historical picture of Jesus Christ is incomparably the most significant contribution made to the world now and always by the New Testament.

#### CONTRIBUTIONS OF PAUL AND JOHN

Nevertheless, it is well that this history is not the only element in the Christian writings. History can become a tyrant, and there is such a thing as slavery to

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Cairns, *The Army and Religion*. London, 1919.

past events. The New Testament itself provides the antidote to that in the religious appreciation and the theological constructions of the Synoptic Gospels, of Paul and of John.

To what are less central factors in the needs of modern days, these typical presentations of Christ have also, as we have seen, something of importance still to say. Paul and the Johannine writer were face to face with the Hellenistic craving for salvation through occult practices, crude pantomimes of the processes of nature, esoteric doctrines, elaborate ritual, the external authority of well-organized hierarchies and the worship of the State. These cravings are by no means yet dead, and the New Testament therefore may still have a very pertinent message in view of the modern frantic hunt for quack remedies in Christian Science, Spiritism, Buddhism, and many other worse substitutes for a faith that requires constant ethical effort and the exercise of strenuous thinking.

The word of John, too, is still in season for those who take refuge from the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune by postulating an irrational and unintelligible universe or in brutal force ; and also for those who worship tradition as divine in Creed and Church and State at the cost of quenching the progressive and holy Spirit of God " who shall lead you into all truth."

We have already discussed from another point of view other elements of permanent value in the Letters of Paul and the Johannine literature, and they all help to give the full New Testament contribution to an adequate presentation of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God as an ideal that may still legitimately sway the modern mind and life.

## 5

### THE NEW TESTAMENT DEMAND

#### THE GOSPEL COMPLETE IN PRINCIPLE

It is only with a deep consciousness of the urgent need for this Gospel, and with absolute confidence in the central significance of its contribution, that the Christian

teacher can face with the necessary courage and patience the whole task of teaching the New Testament. It is a task which must begin early, lasts long and is never finished from one generation to another. Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God are centres of possibilities even more than they are records of accomplishments.

In one sense it is true that this message of the New Testament is complete in itself, namely, in so far as it reveals and energizes the spirit, fundamental principles and permanent values of life. The only possible doubt that can arise in this connection is whether it implies such a positive valuation of human effort, work and civilization in general as we must have to make life in the world worth living. But if there is indeed such a gap in the New Testament, it has long ago been filled by Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation in their almost extravagant emphasis upon the sanctification of all human 'callings' as the only real worship of God and the only direct expression of Christian love to God and man.

Complete as the message of the New Testament may be, however, in the spirit and attitude it reveals, it is manifestly only a very incomplete answer to many of the world's urgent needs. It is manifestly incomplete even in its examples of the practical, personal and social applications which its very faith demands—as well as in its guidance with regard to them.

#### THE NEW TESTAMENT LIMITED IN THE APPLICATION OF THE GOSPEL

Whole regions of the personal and social life were outside its horizon; and inevitably so was the whole realm of the modern ecclesiastical, educational, political and economic situation together with the worlds of modern Science and Art in which the Christian spirit must somehow make its home and to which the principles of the Christian Gospel must somehow be applied. The Christian teacher must not even make the slightest suggestion that the New Testament can or intends to bring anything like the complete material for the solution of the intricate problems involved in the reconstruction

of these realms. It will be quite enough if he can convince men that it is only in the spirit of the Gospel and in the light of its principles that their solution can be hopefully attempted.

For the building up of the family life on Christian lines, for the organization of a Christian State, for the creation of a just industrial order, for the provision of a system of education adequate for all modern needs, and for the growth of a Christian Church which shall be an effective instrument of the Gospel—for all these purposes and many others the world is in urgent need of new ideas as well as a Christian spirit, of new organizing methods as well as moral and spiritual convictions, of an inventive and courageous intelligence as well as a sensitive conscience. There is no magician's wand which can produce all these things out of the New Testament. The world must look elsewhere for them and tax to the utmost all the resources of modern Education, modern Science, modern Philosophy, the history and experience of Industry, State and Church as well as the Christian Gospel, in order to produce them.

Ultimately the faithful teaching of the New Testament itself creates an imperative demand for them—a demand, indeed, so urgent as often to help effectively in the provision of the means for its own realization.

## 6

### THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN THE MODERN WORLD

#### THE GOSPEL NEEDS THE CHURCH

One thing alone out of this realm of the modern application of the Gospel claims a closing word in a discussion of the New Testament in modern Education, and that is, the demand of the Gospel for a Church as its peculiar organ and the instrument of its propagation. The power of the Christian Gospel grows with and out of its incorporation in personal life. It is the witness of

history that to keep alive and to promote the growth of the religious spirit needs some kind of organized community which progressively and spontaneously generates it. A religion of the spirit needs such incorporation more than any other, and it needs a community the definite end and aim of whose existence is the creation, the fostering and propagation of that spirit—a community distinguished from, and in its life independent of, all other societies and organizations living alongside of it in the world. The moral and spiritual independence of the Christian Church is, indeed, of its essence as the organ of the Gospel of the New Testament. Possessing and possessed by the life of the Gospel, how can it possibly be otherwise than independent and supreme in its authority.

How can the Christian Church, for instance, cling to the State and mould itself upon the stereotyped forms of the State and submit the claims of the Gospel to its revision?

Why should the theology whose business it is to interpret that Gospel be subordinated to the categories of a pagan philosophic speculation? Why should its ethics be mutilated to fit the terminology of ancient Greece?

Is the Christian life in ideal or motive the supreme and ultimate life, or is it not? If it is, then it must ultimately find its own independent expression in organization and thought, be propagated by means consonant with itself, and reign supreme, spiritually and morally, by setting the standard for State, Philosophy and Industry.

#### THE CHURCH AND GOSPEL FOR THE WORLD'S NEED

The world indeed, in spite of all its perversities, failures and sins, is waiting for that Church which shall make itself simply and solely the organ of the Gospel of the New Testament at any cost. In every direction men are groping in the dark for light upon the ultimate things, and even the greatest triumphs of the modern world end in urgent questions. Modern Science has searched the material universe for its secrets, and seems to be coming nearer and nearer to the point where spirit bursts through the veil of flesh, revealing more and more the supremacy

of mind over matter. But what mind and what spirit ? Is it that which harnesses the powers of nature to the brutal and ruthless chariots of war, or the spirit of co-operation and love ?

Modern History has searched the remains of the hidden civilizations of man, and found that he has never been able to live and work without some kind of religion. But what religion is the fitting mate of man ? Is it to be the crude superstitions of a revived Animism and Fetishism, or the counterpart of a tribal egoism, or is it to be the ethical spiritual life of the Gospel, the free obedience of the equal children of God all over the world ?

Modern Philosophy has probed the mind and heart and will of man and society, and has met God below the threshold of consciousness, or in the moral imperative, or in the bonds of the community. But what God is it that works above, below, within, without ? Is it a blind force or an irrational energy, or the Heavenly Father of the Gospel ?

Modern Education has looked far into the possibilities of the future and marked the presence of the ideal as the universal condition of human development. But what kind of ideal is it to be—the good workman, the good Englishman, or a world of free moral personalities in love with God and man, such as the Gospel implies ?

These are the most urgent questions in the world of to-day. Men no longer question the reality of spirit, the necessity of religion, the existence of God, the power of the ideal, but they are groping for the answer to the question of what spirit, what religion, what God and what ideal ?

To all of them the Christian Church has the answer in the New Testament, but an answer which the Church as a whole has not yet had the courage and the patience and the faith to give effectively and whole-heartedly. There is, however, no adequate teaching of the New Testament which does not in some way ring out the only answer now possible ; and there is no adequate Church which does not in some way attempt seriously to live, and to justify its proclamation, in the spirit and in the terms of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God.

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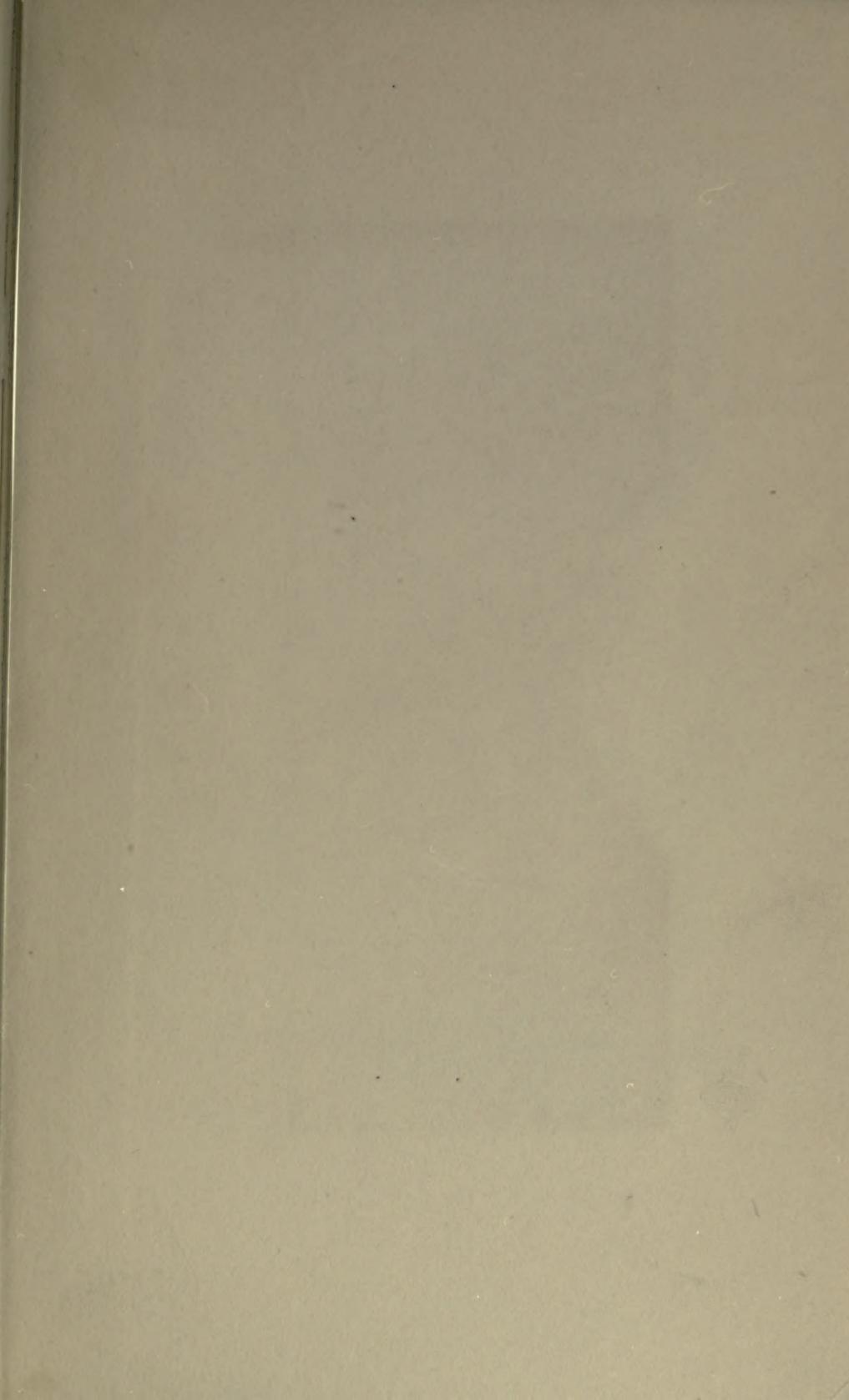
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